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THE WORKS

OF

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(LORD LYTTON)

THE DISOWNED

THIRTY VOLUMES: ILLUSTRATED WITH
FORTY FULL-PAGE ENGRAVINGS

ST. FRANCIS ACADEMY
JOLIET, ILL.

NEW YORK
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THE DISOWNED

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

In this edition of a work composed in early youth I have not attempted to remove those faults of construction which may be sufficiently apparent in the plot; but which could not indeed be thoroughly rectified without rewriting the whole work. I can only hope that with the defects of inexperience may be found some of the merits of frank and artless enthusiasm. I have, however, lightened the narrative of certain episodical and irrelevant passages, and relieved the general style of some boyish extravagances of diction. At the time this work was written I was deeply engaged in the study of metaphysics and ethics—and out of that study grew the character of Algernon Mordaunt. He is represented as a type of the Heroism of Christian Philosophy—a union of love and knowledge placed in the midst of sorrow, and labouring on through the pilgrimage of life, strong in the fortitude that comes from belief in Heaven.

E. B. L.

KNEBWORTH, *May 3, 1852.*

THE DISOWNED.

CHAPTER I.

I'll tell you a story if you please to attend.
Limbo, by G. Knight.

It was the evening of a soft, warm day in the May of 17—. The sun had already set, and the twilight was gathering slowly over the large, still masses of wood which lay on either side of one of those green lanes so peculiar to England. Here and there, the outline of the trees irregularly shrunk back from the road, leaving broad patches of waste land covered with fern—and the yellow blossoms of the dwarf furze, and, at more distant intervals, thick clusters of rushes, from which came the small hum of gnats—those "evening revellers"—alternately rising and sinking in the customary manner of their unknown sports—till, as the shadows grew darker and darker, their thin and airy shapes were no longer distinguishable, and no solitary token of life or motion broke the voiceless monotony of the surrounding woods.

The first sound which invaded the silence came from the light, quick footsteps of a person whose youth betrayed itself in its elastic and unmeasured tread, and in the gay, free carol which broke out by fits and starts upon the gentle stillness of the evening.

There was something rather indicative of poetical taste than musical science in the selection of this vesper hymn, which always commenced with—

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good green wood,

St. Francis Academy
Joliet, Ill.

and never proceeded a syllable farther than the end of the second line,

When birds are about and singing;

from the last word of which, after a brief pause, it invariably started forth into joyous "iteration."

Presently a heavier, yet still more rapid, step than that of the youth was heard behind; and, as it overtook the latter, a loud, clear, good-humoured voice gave the salutation of the evening. The tone in which this courtesy was returned was frank, distinct, and peculiarly harmonious.

"Good evening, my friend. How far is it to W——? I hope I am not out of the direct road?"

"To W——, sir?" said the man, touching his hat, as he perceived, in spite of the dusk, something in the air and voice of his new acquaintance which called for a greater degree of respect than he was at first disposed to accord to a pedestrian traveller—"To W——, sir? why, you will not surely go there to-night? it is more than eight miles distant, and the roads none of the best."

"Now, a curse on all rogues!" quoth the youth with a serious sort of vivacity. "Why, the miller at the foot of the hill, assured me I should be at my journey's end in less than an hour."

"He may have said right, sir," returned the man, "yet you will not reach W—— in twice that time."

"How do you mean?" said the younger stranger.

"Why, that you may for once force a miller to speak truth in spite of himself and make a public-house, about three miles hence, the end of your day's journey."

"Thank you for the hint," said the youth. "Does the house you speak of lie on the road-side?"

"No, sir: the lane branches off about two miles hence, and you must then turn to the right: but *till* then, our way is the same, and if you would not prefer your own company to mine, we can trudge on together."

"With all my heart," rejoined the younger stranger;

"and not the less willingly from the brisk pace you walk. I thought I had few equals in pedestrianism; but it should not be for a small wager that I would undertake to keep up with you."

"Perhaps, sir," said the man, laughing, "I have had in the course of my life a better usage and a longer experience of my heels than you have."

Somewhat startled by a speech of so equivocal a meaning, the youth, for the first time, turned round to examine, as well as the increasing darkness would permit, the size and appearance of his companion. He was not perhaps too well satisfied with his survey. His fellow pedestrian was about six feet high, and of a corresponding girth of limb and frame, which would have made him fearful odds in any encounter where bodily strength was the best means of conquest. Notwithstanding the mildness of the weather, he was closely buttoned in a rough great-coat, which was well calculated to give all due effect to the athletic proportions of the wearer.

There was a pause of some moments.

"This is but a wild, savage sort of scene for England, sir, in this day of new-fashioned ploughs and farming improvements," said the tall stranger, looking round at the ragged wastes, and grim woods, which lay steeped in the shade beside and before them.

"True," answered the youth; "and in a few years agricultural innovation will scarcely leave, even in these wastes, a single furze-blossom for the bee, or a tuft of green-sward for the grasshopper; but, however unpleasant the change may be for us foot-travellers, we must not repine at what they tell us is so sure a witness of the prosperity of the country."

"*They* tell us! *who* tell us?" exclaimed the stranger, with great vivacity. "Is it the puny and spiritless artizan, or the debased and crippled slave of the counter and the till, or the sallow speculator on morals, who would mete us out our liberty—our happiness—our very feel-

ings by the yard, and inch, and fraction? No, no, let *them* follow what the books and precepts of their own wisdom teach them; let them cultivate more highly the lands they have already parcelled out by dykes and fences, and leave, though at scanty intervals, some green patches of unpolluted land for the poor man's breast and the free man's foot."

"You are an enthusiast on this subject," said the younger traveller, not a little surprised at the tone and words of the last speech; "and if I were not just about to commence the world with a firm persuasion that enthusiasm on any matter is a great obstacle to success, I could be as warm, though not so eloquent, as yourself."

"Ah, sir," said the stranger, sinking into a more natural and careless tone, "I have a better right than I imagine you can claim to repine or even to inveigh against the boundaries which are, day by day, and hour by hour, encroaching upon what I have learned to look upon as my own territory. You were, just before I joined you, singing an old song; I honour you for your taste: and no offence, sir, but a sort of fellowship in feeling made me take the liberty to accost you. I am no very great scholar in other things; but I owe my present circumstances of life solely to my fondness for those old songs and quaint madrigals. And I believe no person can better apply to himself Will Shakspeare's invitation:—

'Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither.
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.'"

Relieved from his former fear, but with increased curiosity at this quotation, which was half said, half sung, in a tone which seemed to evince a hearty relish for the sense of the words, the youth replied—

"Truly, I did not expect to meet among the travellers of this wild country with so well-stored a memory. And, indeed, I should have imagined that the only persons to whom your verses could exactly have applied were those honourable vagrants from the Nile, whom in vulgar language we term gipsies."

"Precisely so, sir," answered the tall stranger, indifferently; "precisely so. It is to that ancient body that I belong."

"The devil you do!" quoth the youth, in unsophisticated surprise; "the progress of education is indeed astonishing!"

"Why," answered the stranger, laughing, "to tell you the truth, sir, I am a gipsy by inclination, not birth. The illustrious Bamfylde Moore Carew is not the only example of one of gentle blood and honourable education whom the fleshpots of Egypt have seduced."

"I congratulate myself," quoth the youth, in a tone that might have been in jest, "upon becoming acquainted with a character at once so respectable and so novel; and, to return your quotation in the way of a compliment, I cry out with the most fashionable author of Elizabeth's days—

> 'O for a bowl of fat Canary,
> Rich Palermo—sparkling Sherry,'

in order to drink to our better acquaintance."

"Thank you, sir,—thank you," cried the strange gipsy, seemingly delighted with the spirit with which his young acquaintance appeared to enter into his character, and his quotation from a class of authors at that time much less known and appreciated than at present; "and if you have already seen enough of the world to take up with ale when neither Canary, Palermo, nor Sherry are forthcoming, I will promise, at least, to pledge you in large draughts of that homely beverage. What say you to passing a night with us? our tents are yet more at hand than the public-house of which I spoke to you."

The young man hesitated a moment, then replied—

"I will answer you frankly, my friend, even though I may find cause to repent my confidence. I have a few guineas about me, which, though not a large sum, are *my all*. Now, however ancient and honourable your fraternity may be, they labour under a sad confusion, I fear, in their ideas of *meum* and *tuum*."

"Faith, sir, I believe you are right; and were you some years older, I think you would not have favoured me with the same disclosure you have done now; but you may be quite easy on that score. If you were made of gold, the rascals would not filch off the corner of your garment as long as you were under my protection. Does this assurance satisfy you?"

"Perfectly," said the youth: "and now how far are we from your encampment? I assure you I am all eagerness to be among a set of which I have witnessed such a specimen."

"Nay, nay," returned the gipsy, "you must not judge of all my brethren by me: I confess that they are but a rough tribe. However, I love them dearly: and am only the more inclined to think them honest to each other, because they are rogues to all the rest of the world."

By this time our travellers had advanced nearly two miles since they had commenced companionship; and at a turn in the lane, about three hundred yards further on, they caught a glimpse of a distant fire burning brightly through the dim trees. They quickened their pace, and striking a little out of their path into a common soon approached two tents, the Arab homes of the vagrant and singular people with whom the gipsy claimed brotherhood and alliance.

CHAPTER II.

Here we securely live and eat
The cream of meat;
And keep eternal fires
By which we sit and *do divine.*
HERRICK—*Ode to Sir Clipseby Crew.*

AROUND a fire which blazed and crackled beneath the large seething-pot, that seemed an emblem of the mystery, and a promise of the good cheer, which are the supposed characteristics of the gipsy race, were grouped seven or eight persons, upon whose swarthy and strong countenances the irregular and fitful flame cast a picturesque and not unbecoming glow. All of these, with the exception of an old crone, who was tending the pot, and a little boy who was feeding the fire with sundry fragments of stolen wood, started to their feet upon the entrance of the stranger.

"What ho! my bob cuffins," cried the gipsy guide, "I have brought you a gentry cove, to whom you will show all proper respect: and hark ye, my maunders, if ye dare beg, borrow, or steal a single croker—ay—but a bawbee of him, I'll—but ye know me." The gipsy stopped abruptly, and turned an eye, in which menace vainly struggled with good humour, upon each of his brethren, as they submissively bowed to him and his *protégé*, and poured forth a profusion of promises, to which their admonitor did not even condescend to listen. He threw off his great-coat, doubled it down by the best place near the fire, and made the youth forthwith possess himself of the seat it afforded. He then lifted the cover of the mysterious cauldron. "Well, Mort," cried he to the old woman, as he bent wistfully down, "what have we here?"

"Two ducks, three chickens, and a rabbit, with some potatoes," growled the old hag, who claimed the usual privilege of her culinary office, to be as ill-tempered as she pleased.

"Good!" said the gipsy: "and now, Mim, my cull, go to the other tent, and ask its inhabitants, in my name, to come here and sup; bid them bring *their* cauldron to eke out ours—I'll find the lush."

With these words (which Mim, a short, swarthy member of the gang, with a countenance too astute to be pleasing, instantly started forth to obey) the gipsy stretched himself at full length by the youth's side, and began reminding him with some jocularity, and at some length, of his promise to drink to their better acquaintance.

Something there was in the scene, the fire, the cauldron, the intent figure and withered countenance of the old woman, the grouping of the other forms, the rude but not unpicturesque tent, the dark still woods on either side, with the deep and cloudless skies above, as the stars broke forth one by one upon the silent air, which (to use the orthodox phrase of the novelist) would not have been wholly unworthy the bold pencil of Salvator himself.

The youth eyed, with that involuntary respect which personal advantages always command, the large, yet symmetrical proportions of his wild companion; nor was the face which belonged to that frame much less deserving of attention. Though not handsome, it was both shrewd and prepossessing in its expression; the forehead was prominent, the brows overhung the eyes, which were large, dark, and, unlike those of the tribe in general, rather calm than brilliant; the complexion, though sun-burnt, was not swarthy, and the face was carefully and cleanly shaved, so as to give all due advantage of contrast to the brown luxuriant locks which fell rather in flakes than curls, on either side of the healthful and manly cheeks. In age, he was about thirty-five, and, though his air and mien were assuredly not lofty, nor aristocratic, yet they were strikingly above the bearing of his vagabond companions: those companions were in all respects of the ordinary race of gipsies; the cunning and flashing eye, the raven locks, the dazzling teeth, the bronze colour, and the low, slight, active form

were as strongly their distinguishing characteristics as the tokens of all their tribe.

But to these, the appearance of the youth presented a striking and beautiful contrast.

He had only just passed the stage of boyhood, perhaps he might have seen eighteen summers, probably not so many. He had, in imitation of his companion, and perhaps from mistaken courtesy to his new society, doffed his hat; and the attitude which he had chosen fully developed the noble and intellectual turn of his head and throat. His hair, as yet preserved from the disfiguring fashions of the day, was of a deep auburn, which was rapidly becoming of a more chestnut hue, and curled in short close curls from the nape of the neck to the commencement of a forehead singularly white and high. His brows finely and lightly pencilled, and his long lashes of the darkest dye, gave a deeper and perhaps softer shade than they otherwise would have worn, to eyes quick and observant in their expression, and of a light hazel in their colour. His cheek was very fair, and the red light of the fire cast an artificial tint of increased glow upon a complexion that had naturally rather bloom than colour, while a dark riding frock set off in their full beauty the fine outline of his chest, and the slender symmetry of his frame.

But it was neither his features, nor his form, eminently handsome as they were, which gave the principal charm to the young stranger's appearance—it was the strikingly bold, buoyant, frank, and almost joyous expression which presided over all. *There* seemed to dwell the first glow and life of youth, undimmed by a single fear, and unbaffled in a single hope. *There* were the elastic spring, the inexhaustible wealth of energies which defined, in their exulting pride, the heaviness of sorrow and the harassments of time. It was a face that, while it filled you with some melancholy foreboding of the changes and chances which must, in the inevitable course of fate, cloud the openness of the unwrinkled brow, and soberise the fire of

the daring and restless eye, instilled also within you some assurance of triumph, and some omen of success:—a vague but powerful sympathy with the adventurous and cheerful spirit which appeared literally to speak in its expression. It was a face you might imagine in one born under a prosperous star, and you felt, as you gazed, a confidence in that bright countenance, which, like the shield of the British Prince,[1] seemed possessed with a spell to charm into impotence the evil spirits who menaced its possessor.

"Well, sir," said his friend, the gipsy, who had in his turn been surveying with admiration the sinewy and agile frame of his young guest, "well, sir, how fares your appetite? Old Dame Bingo will be mortally offended if you do not do ample justice to her good cheer."

"If so," answered our traveller, who, young as he was, had learnt already the grand secret of making in every situation, a female friend, "if so, I shall be likely to offend her still more."

"And how, my pretty master?" said the old crone with an iron smile.

"Why, I shall be bold enough to reconcile matters with a kiss, Mrs. Bingo," answered the youth.

"Ha! ha!" shouted the tall gipsy; "it is many a long day since my old Mort slapped a gallant's face for such an affront. But here come our messmates. Good evening, my mumpers—make your bows to this gentleman who has come to bowse with us to-night. 'Gad we'll show him that old ale's none the worse for keeping company with the moon's darlings. Come, sit down, sit down. Where's the cloth, ye ill-mannered loons, and the knives and platters? Have we no holiday customs for strangers, think ye? Mim, my cove, off to *my* caravan—bring out the knives, and all other rattletraps; and hark ye, my cuffin, this small key opens the inner hole, where you will find two barrels; bring one of them. I'll warrant it of the best, for the brewer himself drank some of the same sort

[1] Prince Arthur.—See *The Fairy Queen.*

but two hours before I *nimm'd* them. Come, stump, my cull, make yourself wings. Ho, Dame Bingo, is not that pot of thine seething yet? Ah my young gentleman, you commence betimes; so much the better; if love's a summer's day, we all know how early a summer morning begins," added the jovial Egyptian in a lower voice (feeling perhaps that he was only understood by himself), as he gazed complacently on the youth, who, with that happy facility of making himself everywhere at home so uncommon to his countrymen was already paying compliments suited to their understanding, to two fair daughters of the tribe, who had entered with the new comers. Yet had he too much craft or delicacy, call it which you will, to continue his addresses to that limit where ridicule or jealousy, from the male part of the assemblage might commence; on the contrary, he soon turned to the men, and addressed them with a familiarity so frank, and so suited to their taste, that he grew no less rapidly in their favour than he had already done in that of the women, and when the contents of the two cauldrons were at length set upon the coarse, but clean, cloth which, in honour of his arrival, covered the sod, it was in the midst of a loud and universal peal of laughter which some broad witticism of the young stranger had produced, that the party sat down to their repast.

Bright were the eyes and sleek the tresses of the damsel who placed herself by the side of the stranger, and many were the alluring glances and insinuated compliments which replied to his open admiration and profuse flattery; but still there was nothing exclusive in his attentions: perhaps an ignorance of the customs of his entertainers, and a consequent discreet fear of offending them, restrained him; or perhaps he found ample food for occupation in the plentiful dainties which his host heaped before him.

"Now tell me," said the gipsy chief (for chief he appeared to be), "if we lead not a merrier life than you dreamt of? or would you have us change our coarse fare

and our simple tents, our vigorous limbs and free hearts, for the meagre board, the monotonous chamber, the diseased frame, and the toiling, careful, and withered spirit of some miserable mechanic?"

"Change!" cried the youth, with an earnestness which, if affected, was an exquisite counterfeit—"by Heaven, I would change with you myself."

"Bravo, my fine cove!" cried the host, and all the gang echoed their sympathy with his applause.

The youth continued: "Meat, and that plentiful; ale, and that strong; women, and those pretty ones; what can man desire more?"

"Ay," cried the host, "and all for nothing,—no, not even a tax; who else in this kingdom can say that? Come, Mim, push round the ale."

And the ale *was* pushed round, and if coarse the merriment, loud at least was the laugh that rang ever and anon from the old tent; and though, at moments, something in the guest's eye and lip might have seemed, to a very shrewd observer, a little wandering and absent, yet, upon the whole, he was almost as much at ease as the rest, and if he was not quite as talkative, he was to the full as noisy.

By degrees, as the hour grew later, and the barrel less heavy, the conversation changed into one universal clatter. Some told their feats in beggary; others, their achievements in theft; not a viand they had fed on but had its appropriate legend; even the old rabbit, which had been as tough as old rabbit can well be, had not been honestly taken from his burrow; no less a person than Mim himself had purloined it from a widow's footman who was carrying it to an old maid from her nephew the Squire.

"Silence," cried the host, who loved talking as well as the rest, and who, for the last ten minutes, had been vainly endeavouring to obtain attention. "Silence! my maunders, it's late, and we shall have the queer cuffins[1] upon us if we keep it up much longer. What, ho, Mim, are you

[1] Magistrates.

still gabbling at the foot of the table when your betters are talking? As sure as my name's King Cole, I'll choke you with your own rabbit skin, if you don't hush your prating cheat—nay, never look so abashed—if you *will* make a noise, come forward, and sing us a gipsy song. You see, my young sir," turning to his guest, "that we are not without our pretensions to the fine arts."

At this order, Mim started forth, and taking his station at the right hand of the *soi-disant* King Cole, began the following song, the chorus of which was chaunted in full diapason by the whole group, with the additional force of emphasis that knives, feet, and fists could bestow:—

THE GIPSY'S SONG.

The king to his hall, and the steed to his stall,
And the cit to his bilking board:
But we are not bound to an acre of ground,
For our home is the houseless sward.
We sow not, nor toil; yet we glean from the soil
As much as its reapers do;
And wherever we rove, we feed on the cove
Who gibes at the mumping crew.
CHORUS—So the king to his hall, &c.

We care not a straw for the limbs of the law,
Nor a fig for the *cuffin queer;*
While Hodge and his neighbour shall lavish and labour,
Our tent is as sure of its cheer.
CHORUS—So the king to his hall, &c.

The worst have an awe of the *harman's*[1] claw,
And the best will avoid the *trap;*[2]
But our wealth is as free of the bailiff's *see,*
As our necks of the twisting crap,[3]
CHORUS—So the king to his hall, &c.

They say it is sweet to win the meat
For the which one has sorely wrought;
But I never could find that we lack'd the mind
For the food that has cost us nought!
CHORUS—So the king to his hall, &c.

[1] Constable. [2] Bailiff. [3] Gallows.

And when we have ceased from our fearless feast,
  Why, our *jigger*[1] will need no bars;
Our sentry shall be on the owlet's tree,
  And our lamps the glorious stars.

CHORUS.

So the king to his hall, and the steed to his stall,
  And the cit to his bilking board;
But we are not bound to an acre of ground,
  For our home is the houseless sward.

Rude as was this lawless stave, the spirit with which it was sung atoned to the young stranger for its obscurity and quaintness; as for his host, that curious personage took a lusty and prominent part in the chorus—nor did the old woods refuse their share of the burden, but sent back a merry echo to the chief's deep voice and the harsher notes of his jovial brethren.

When the glee had ceased, King Cole rose, the whole band followed his example, the cloth was cleared in a thrice, the barrel—oh! what a falling off was there!—was rolled into a corner of the tent, and the crew to whom the awning belonged began to settle themselves to rest; while those who owned the other encampment marched forth, with King Cole at their head. Leaning with no light weight upon his guest's arm, the lover of ancient minstrelsy poured into the youth's ear a strain of eulogy, rather eloquent than coherent, upon the scene they had just witnessed.

"What," cried his majesty in an enthusiastic tone, "what can be so truly regal as our state? Can any man control us? Are we not above all laws? Are we not the most despotic of kings? Nay, more than the kings of earth—are we not the kings of Fairyland itself? Do we not realise the golden dreams of the old rhymers—luxurious dogs that they were? Who would not cry out—

[1] Door.

'Blest silent groves! O may ye be
For ever Mirth's best nursery!
May pure Contents
For ever pitch *their tents*
Upon these downs, these meads, these rocks, these mountains.'"

Uttering this notable extract from the thrice-honoured Sir Henry Wotton, King Cole turned abruptly from the common, entered the wood which skirted it, and, only attended by his guest, and his minister Mim, came suddenly, by an unexpected and picturesque opening in the trees upon one of those itinerant vehicles termed caravans; he ascended the few steps which led to the entrance, opened the door, and was instantly in the arms of a pretty and young woman. On seeing our hero (for such we fear the youth is likely to become), she drew back with a blush not often found upon regal cheeks.

"Pooh," said King Cole, half tauntingly, half fondly, "pooh, Lucy, blushes are garden flowers, and ought never to be found wild in the woods:" then changing his tone, he said, "Come, put some fresh straw in the corner, this stranger honours our palace to-night—Mim, unload thyself of our royal treasures—watch without, and vanish from within!"

Depositing on his majesty's floor the appurtenances of the regal supper-table, Mim made his respectful adieus, and disappeared; meanwhile the Queen scattered some fresh straw over a mattress in the narrow chamber, and, laying over all a sheet of singularly snowy hue, made her guest some apology for the badness of his lodging; this King Cole interrupted, by a most elaborately noisy yawn, and a declaration of extreme sleepiness. "Now, Lucy, let us leave the gentleman to what he will like better than soft words, even from a queen. Good-night, sir, we shall be stirring at daybreak;" and, with this farewell, King Cole took the lady's arm, and retired with her into an inner compartment of the caravan.

Left to himself, our hero looked round with surprise at

the exceeding neatness which reigned over the whole apartment. But what chiefly engrossed the attention of one to whose early habits books had always been treasures, were several volumes, ranged in comely shelves, fenced with wirework, on either side of the fireplace. "Courage," thought he, as he stretched himself on his humble couch, "my adventures have commenced well; a gipsy tent, to be sure, is nothing very new, but a gipsy who quotes poetry, and enjoys a modest wife, speaks better than books do for the improvement of the world!"

CHAPTER III.

Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp?—*As You Like It.*

The sun broke cheerfully through the small lattice of the caravan, as the youth opened his eyes, and saw the good-humoured countenance of his gipsy host bending over him complacently.

"You slept so soundly, sir, that I did not like to disturb you; but my good wife only waits your rising to have all ready for breakfast."

"It were a thousand pities," cried the guest, leaping from his bed, "that so pretty a face should look cross on my account, so I will not keep her waiting an instant."

The gipsy smiled, as he answered, "I require no professional help from the devil, sir, to foretell your fortune."

"No!—and what is it?"

"Honour, reputation, success: all that are ever won by a soft tongue, if it be backed by a bold heart."

Bright and keen was the flash which shot over the countenance of the one for whom this prediction was made, as he listened to it with a fondness for which his reason rebuked him.

He turned aside with a sigh, which did not escape the gipsy, and bathed his face in the water which the provident hand of the good woman had set out for his lavations.

"Well," said his host, when the youth had finished his brief toilet, "suppose we breathe the fresh air, while Lucy smoothes your bed, and prepares the breakfast?"

"With all my heart," replied the youth, and they descended the steps which led into the wood. It was a beautiful, fresh morning, the air was like a draught from a Spirit's fountain, and filled the heart with new youth, and the blood with a rapturous delight; the leaves—the green, green leaves of spring—were quivering on the trees; among which, the happy birds fluttered and breathed the gladness of their souls in song. While the dewdrops that

strewed
A baptism o'er the flowers,

gave back, in their million mirrors, the reflected smiles of the cloudless and rejoicing sun.

"Nature," said the gipsy, "has bestowed on her children a gorgeous present in such a morning."

"True," said the youth; "and you, of us two, perhaps, only deserve it: as for me, when I think of the long road of dust, heat, and toil, that lies before me, I could almost wish to stop here and ask an admission into the gipsy's tents."

"You could not do a wiser thing!" said the gipsy, gravely.

"But fate leaves me no choice," continued the youth, as seriously as if he were in earnest; "and I must quit you immediately after I have a second time tasted of your hospitable fare."

"If it must be so," answered the gipsy, "I will see you, at least, a mile or two on your road." The youth thanked him for a promise which his curiosity made acceptable, and they turned once more to the caravan.

The meal, however obtained, met with as much honour

as it could possibly have received from the farmer from whom its materials were borrowed.

It was not without complacency that the worthy pair beheld the notice their guest lavished upon a fair, curly-headed boy of about three years old, the sole child and idol of the gipsy potentates. But they did not perceive, when the youth rose to depart, that he slipped into the folds of the child's dress a ring of some value, the only one he possessed.

"And now," said he, after having thanked his entertainers for their hospitality, "I must say good-bye to your flock, and set out upon my day's journey."

Lucy, despite her bashfulness, shook hands with her handsome guest, and the latter, accompanied by the gipsy chief, strolled down to the encampments.

Open and free was his parting farewell to the inmates of the two tents, and liberal was the hand which showered upon all—especially on the damsel who had been his Thais of the evening feast—the silver coins which made no inconsiderable portion of his present property.

It was amidst the oracular wishes and favourable predictions of the whole crew, that he recommenced his journey with the gipsy chief.

When the tents were fairly out of sight, and not till then, King Cole broke the silence which had as yet subsisted between them.

"I suppose my young gentleman, that you expect to meet some of your friends or relations at W——? I know not what they will say when they hear where you have spent the night."

"Indeed!" said the youth; "whoever hears my adventures, relation or not, will be delighted with my description; but in sober earnest, I expect to find no one at W—— more my friend than a surly innkeeper, unless it be his dog."

"Why, they surely do not suffer a stripling of your youth and evident quality to wander alone!" cried King Cole, in undisguised surprise.

The young traveller made no prompt answer, but bent down as if to pluck a wild flower which grew by the roadside: after a pause, he said—

"Nay, Master Cole, you must not set me the example of playing the inquisitor, or you cannot guess how troublesome I shall be. To tell you the truth, I am dying with curiosity to know something more about you than you may be disposed to tell me: you have already confessed that, however boon companions your gipsies may be, it is not among gipsies that you where born and bred."

King Cole laughed: perhaps he was not ill pleased by the curiosity of his guest, nor by the opportunity it afforded him of being his own hero.

"My story, sir," said he, "would be soon told, if you thought it worth the hearing, nor does it contain anything which should prevent my telling it."

"If so," quoth the youth, "I shall conceive your satisfying my request a still greater favour than those you have already bestowed upon me."

The gipsy relaxed his pace into an indolent saunter, as he commenced:

"The first scene that I remember was similar to that which you witnessed last night. The savage tent, and the green moor—the faggot blaze—the eternal pot, with its hissing note of preparation—the old dame who tended it, and the ragged urchins who learnt from its contents the first reward of theft, and the earliest temptation to it—all these are blended into agreeable confusion as the primal impressions of my childhood. The woman who nutured me as my mother was rather capricious than kind, and my infancy passed away, like that of more favoured scions of fortune, in alternate chastisement and caresses. In good truth, Kinching Meg had the shrillest voice and the heaviest hand of the whole crew, and I cannot complain of injustice, since she treated me no worse than the rest. Notwithstanding the irregularity of my education, I grew up strong and healthy, and my reputed mother had taught me

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so much fear for herself, that she left me none for anything else; accordingly, I became bold, reckless, and adventurous, and at the age of thirteen was as thorough a reprobate as the tribe could desire. At that time a singular change befell me: we (that is, my mother and myself) were begging, not many miles hence, at the door of a rich man's house, in which the mistress lay on her deathbed. That mistress was my *real* mother, from whom Meg had stolen me in the first year of existence. Whether it was through the fear of conscience, or the hope of reward, no sooner had Meg learnt the dangerous state of my poor mother, the constant grief, which they said had been the sole, though slow, cause of her disease, and the large sums which had been repeatedly offered for my recovery; no sooner, I say, did Meg ascertain all these particulars, than she fought her way up to the sick-chamber, fell on her knees before the bed, owned her crime, and produced myself. Various little proofs of time, place, circumstance; the clothing I had worn when stolen, and which was still preserved, joined to the striking likeness I bore to both my parents, especially to my father, silenced all doubt and incredulity; I was welcomed home with a joy which it is vain to describe. My return seemed to recall my mother from the grave; she lingered on for many months longer than her physicians thought it possible, and when she died, her last words commended me to my father's protection.

"My surviving parent needed no such request. He lavished upon me all that superfluity of fondness and food, of which those good people who are resolved to spoil their children, are so prodigal. He could not bear the idea of sending me to school; accordingly he took a tutor for me, a simple-hearted, gentle, kind man, who possessed a vast store of learning rather curious than useful. He was a tolerable, and at least an enthusiastic antiquarian—a more than tolerable poetaster; and he had a prodigious budget full of old ballads and songs, which *he* loved better to teach

and *I* to learn, than all the 'Latin, Greek, geography, astronomy, and the use of the globes,' which my poor father had so sedulously bargained for.

"Accordingly, I became exceedingly well-informed in all the 'precious conceits' and 'golden garlands' of our British ancients, and continued exceedingly ignorant of everything else, save and except a few of the most fashionable novels of the day, and the contents of six lying volumes of voyages and travels which flattered both my appetite for the wonderful, and my love of the adventurous. My studies, such as they were, were not by any means suited to curb or direct the vagrant tastes my childhood had acquired: on the contrary, the old poets, with their luxurious description of the 'green wood' and the forest life; the fashionable novelists, with their spirited accounts of the wanderings of some fortunate rogue, and the ingenious travellers, with their wild fables, so dear to the imagination of every boy, only fomented within me a strong though secret regret at my change of life, and a restless disgust to the tame home and bounded roamings to which I was condemned. When I was about seventeen, my father sold his property (which he had become possessed of in right of my mother), and tranferred the purchase money to the security of the funds. Shortly afterwards he died; the bulk of his fortune became mine; the remainder was settled upon a sister, many years older than myself, who, in consequence of her marriage and residence in a remote part of Wales, I had never yet seen.

"Now, then, I was pefectly free and unfettered; my guardian lived in Scotland, and left me entirely to the guidance of my tutor, who was both too simple and too indolent to resist my inclinations. I went to London, became acquainted with a set of most royal scamps, frequented the theatres, and the taverns, the various resorts which constitute the gaieties of a blood just above the middle class, and was one of the noisiest and wildest 'blades' that ever heard the 'chimes by midnight,' and the

magistrate's lecture for matins. I was a sort of leader among the jolly dogs I consorted with.

"My earlier education gave a raciness and nature to my delineations of 'life,' which delighted them. But somehow or other I grew wearied of this sort of existence. About a year after I was of age my fortune was more than three parts spent; I fell ill with drinking, and grew dull with remorse; need I add that my comrades left me to myself? A fit of the spleen, especially if accompanied with duns, makes one wonderfully misanthropic; so, when I recovered from my illness, I set out on a tour through Great Britain and France—alone, and principally on foot. Oh, the rapture of shaking off the half friends and cold formalities of society and finding oneself all unfettered, with no companion but nature, no guide but youth, and no flatterer but hope!

"Well, my young friend, I travelled for two years, and saw even in that short time enough of this busy world to weary and disgust me with its ordinary customs. I was not made to be polite, still less to be ambitious. I sighed after the coarse comrades and the free tents of my first associates; and a thousand remembrances of the gipsy wanderings steeped in all the green and exhilarating colours of childhood, perpetually haunted my mind. On my return from my wanderings I found a letter from my sister, who, having become a widow, had left Wales, and had now fixed her residence in a well-visited watering-place in the west of England. I had never yet seen her, and her letter was a fine ladylike sort of epistle, with a great deal of romance and a very little sense, written in an extremely pretty hand, and ending with a quotation from Pope (I never could endure Pope, nor indeed any of the poets of the days of Anne and her successors). It was a beautiful season of the year; I had been inured to pedestrian excursions, so I set off on foot to see my nearest surviving relative. On the way, I fell in (though on a very different spot) with the very encampment you saw last night. By

Heavens, that was a merry meeting to me! I joined, and journeyed with them for several days—never do I remember a happier time. Then, after many years of bondage and stiffness, and accordance with the world, I found myself at ease, like a released bird; with what zest did I join in the rude jokes and the knavish tricks, the stolen feasts and the roofless nights of those careless vagabonds.

"I left my fellow-travellers at the entrance of the town where my sister lived. Now came the contrast. Somewhat hot, rather coarsely clad and covered with the dust of a summer's day, I was ushered into a little drawing-room, eighteen feet by twelve, as I was afterwards somewhat pompously informed. A flaunting carpet, green, red, and yellow, covered the floor. A full-length picture of a thin woman, looking most agreeably ill-tempered, stared down at me from the chimney-piece; three stuffed birds—how emblematic of domestic life!—stood stiff and imprisoned, even after death, in a glass cage. A fire-screen and a bright fireplace; chairs covered with holland, to preserve them from the atmosphere; and long mirrors, wrapped as to the frame-work in yellow muslin, to keep off the flies, finish the panorama of this watering-place mansion. The door opened—silks rustled—voice shrieked 'My Brother!' and a figure—a thin figure—the original of the picture over the chimney-piece—rushed in."

"I can well fancy her joy," said the youth.

"You can do no such thing, begging your pardon, sir," resumed King Cole. "She had no joy at all:—she was exceedingly surprised and disappointed. In spite of my early adventures, I had nothing picturesque or romantic about me at all. I was very thirsty and I called for beer; I was very tired, and I lay down on the sofa; I wore thick shoes and small buckles; and my clothes were made, God knows where and were certainly put on God knows how. My sister was miserably ashamed of me; she had not even manners to disguise it. In a higher rank of life than that

which she held she would have suffered far less mortification; for I fancy great people pay but little *real* attention to externals. Even if a man of rank is vulgar, it makes no difference in the orbit in which he moves; but your 'genteel gentlewomen' are so terribly dependent upon what Mrs. Tomkins will say—so very uneasy about their relations, and the opinion they are held in—and, above all, so made up of appearances and clothes—so undone if they do not eat, drink, and talk *à la mode*, that I can fancy no shame like that of my poor sister at having found, and *being found with*, a vulgar brother.

"I saw how unwelcome I was and I did not punish myself by a long visit. I left her house and returned towards London. On my road, I again met with my gipsy friends; the warmth of their welcome enchanted me—you may guess the rest. I stayed with them so long that I could not bear to leave them; I re-entered their crew: I am one among them. Not that I have become altogether and solely of the tribe; I still leave them whenever the whim seizes me, and repair to the great cities and thoroughfares of man. There I am soon driven back again to my favourite and fresh fields, as a reed upon a wild stream is dashed back upon the green rushes from which it has been torn. You perceive that I have many comforts and distinctions above the rest; for, alas, sir, there is no society however free and democratic, where wealth will not create an aristocracy; the remnant of my fortune provides me with my unostentatious equipage, and the few luxuries it contains; it repays secretly to the poor what my fellow-vagrants occasionally filch from them; it allows me to curb among the crew all the grosser and heavier offences against the law to which want might otherwise compel them; and it serves to keep up that sway and ascendency which my superior education and fluent spirits enabled me at first to attain. Though not *legally* their king, I assume that title over the few encampments with which I am accustomed to travel; and you perceive that I have given my simple name both

to the jocular and kingly dignity of which the old song will often remind you. My story is done."

"Not quite," said his companion: "your wife? How came you by that blessing?"

"Ah! thereby hangs a pretty and a love-sick tale, which would not stand ill in an ancient ballad; but I will content myself with briefly sketching it. Lucy is the daughter of a gentleman farmer: about four years ago I fell in love with her. I wooed her clandestinely, and at last I owned I was a gipsy; I did not add my birth nor fortune—no, I was full of the romance of the Nut-brown Maid's lover, and attempted a trial of woman's affection, which even in these days was not disappointed. Still her father 'would not consent to our marriage, till very luckily things went bad with him; corn, crops, cattle—the deuce was in them all; an execution was in his house, and a writ out against his person. I settled these matters for him, and in return received a father-in-law's blessing, and we are now the best friends in the world. Poor Lucy is perfectly reconciled to her caravan and her wandering husband, and has never, I believe, once repented the day on which she became the gipsy's wife!"

"I thank you heartily for your history," said the youth, who had listened very attentively to this detail; "and though my happiness and pursuits are centred in that world which you despise, yet I confess that I feel a sensation very like envy at your singular choice; and I would not dare ask of my heart whether that choice is not happier, as it is certainly more philosophical, than mine."

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They had now reached a part of the road where the country assumed a totally different character; the woods and moors were no longer visible, but a broad and somewhat bleak extent of country lay before them. Here and there only a few solitary trees broke the uniformity of the wide fields and scanty hedgerows, and at distant intervals the thin spires of the scattered churches rose like the

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prayers of which they were the symbols, to mingle themselves with heaven.

The gipsy paused: "I will accompany you," said he, "no farther: your way lies straight onwards, and you will reach W—— before noon; farewell, and may God watch over you!"

"Farewell!" said the youth, warmly pressing the hand which was extended to him. "If we ever meet again, it will probably solve a curious riddle, viz., whether *you* are not disgusted with the caravan, and *I* with the world!"

"The latter is more likely than the former," said the gipsy, "for one stands a much greater chance of being disgusted with others than with oneself; so changing a little the old lines, I will wish you adieu after my own fashion, viz., in verse—

> 'Go, set thy heart on wingèd wealth,
> Or unto honour's towers aspire;
> But give me freedom and my health,
> And there's the sum of my desire!'"

CHAPTER IV.

The letter, madam—have you none for me?—*The Rendezvous.*

Provide surgeons—*Lover's Progress.*

Our solitary traveller pursued his way with a light step, and gay spirits of youth and health.

"Turn gipsy, indeed!" he said, talking to himself; "there is something better in store for me than that. Ay, I have all the world before me where to choose—*not* my place of rest. No, many a long year will pass away ere any place of rest will be my choice! I wonder whether I shall find the letter at W——; *the* letter, the last letter I shall ever have from home: but it is no home to me now; and *I—I*, insulted, reviled, trampled upon, without even a

name—well, well, I will earn a still fairer one than that of my forefathers. They shall be proud to own me yet." And with these words the speaker broke off abruptly, with a swelling chest and a flashing eye; and as, an unknown and friendless adventurer, he gazed on the expanded and silent country around him, he felt like Castruccio Castrucani, that he could stretch his hands to the east and to the west, and exclaim, "Oh, that my power kept pace with my spirit, then should it grasp the corners of the earth!"

The road wound at last from the champaign country, through which it had for some miles extended itself, into a narrow lane, girded on either side by a dead fence. As the youth entered this lane, he was somewhat startled by the abrupt appearance of a horseman, whose steed leaped the hedge so close to our hero as almost to endanger his safety. The rider, a gentleman of about five-and-twenty, pulled up, and in a tone of great courtesy, apologised for his inadvertency; the apology was readily admitted, and the horseman rode onwards in the direction of W——.

Trifling as this accident was, the air and mien of the stranger were sufficient to arrest, irresistibly, the thoughts of the young traveller; and before they had flowed into a fresh channel he found himself in the town, and at the door of the inn to which his expedition was bound. He entered the bar; a buxom landlady, and a still more buxom daughter, were presiding over the spirits of the place.

"You have some boxes and a letter for me, I believe," said the young gentleman to the comely hostess.

"To *you*, sir!—the name if you please?"

"To—to—to C— L—," said the youth; "the initials C. L., to be left till called for."

"Yes, sir, we *have* some luggage—came last night by the van, and a letter besides, sir, to C. L. also."

The daughter lifted her large dark eyes at the handsome stranger, and felt a wonderful curiosity to know what the letter to C. L. could possibly be about; meanwhile, mine hostess, raising her hand to a shelf, on which

stood an Indian slop-basin, the great ornament of the bar at the Golden Fleece, brought from its cavity a well-folded and well-sealed epistle.

"That is it," cried the youth; "show me a private room instantly."

"What *can* he want a private room for?" thought the landlady's daughter.

"Show the gentleman to the Griffin, No. 4, John Merrylack," said the landlady herself.

With an impatient step the owner of the letter followed a slipshod and marvellously unwashed waiter into No. 4—a small square asylum for town travellers, country yeomen, and single gentlemen; presenting, on the one side, an admirable engraving of the Marquis of Granby, and on the other an equally delightful view of the stable-yard.

Mr. C. L. flung himself on a chair (there *were* only four chairs in No. 4) watched the waiter out of the room, seized his letter, broke open the seal, and read—yea, reader, *you* shall read it too—as follows:—

"Inclosed is the sum to which you are entitled; remember, that it is all which you can ever claim at my hands; remember, also that *you* have made the choice which, now, nothing can persuade me to alter. Be the name you have so long iniquitously borne henceforth and always forgotten; upon that condition you may yet hope from my generosity, the future assistance which you *must* want, but which you could not ask from my affection. Equally by my heart and my reason, you are forever DISOWNED."

The letter fell from the reader's hands. He took up the inclosure; it was an order payable in London for £1000; to him it seemed like the rental of the Indies.

"Be it so!" he said aloud, and slowly; "be it so! With this will I carve my way; many a name in history was built upon a worse foundation!"

With these words he carefully put up the money, re-

read the brief note which inclosed it, tore the latter into pieces, and then, going towards the aforesaid view of the stable-yard, threw open the window and leant out, apparently in earnest admiration of two pigs, which marched, gruntingly, towards him, one goat regaling himself upon a cabbage, and a broken-winded, emaciated horse, which having just been what the ostler called "rubbed down," was just going to be what the ostler called "fed."

While engaged in this interesting survey the clatter of of hoofs was suddenly heard upon the rough pavement—a bell rang—a dog barked—the pigs grunted—the ostler ran out, and the stranger, whom our hero had before met on the road, trotted into the yard.

It was evident from the obsequiousness of the attendants that the horseman was a personage of no mean importance; and indeed there was something singularly distinguished and highbred in his air and carriage.

"Who *can* that be?" said the youth, as the horseman, having dismounted, turned towards the door of the inn: the question was readily answered—"There goes pride and poverty!" said the ostler—"Here comes Squire Mordaunt!" said the landlady.

At the further end of the stable-yard, through a narrow gate, the youth caught a glimpse of the green-sward, and the springing flowers of a small garden. Wearied with the sameness of No. 4, rather than with his journey, he sauntered towards the said gate, and, seating himself in a small arbour within the garden, surrendered himself to reflection.

The result of this self-conference was a determination to leave the Golden Fleece by the earliest conveyance which went to the great object and emporium of all his plans and thoughts, London. As, full of this resolution, and buried in the dream which it conjured up, he was returning with downcast eyes and unheeding steps through the stable-yard, to the delights of No. 4, he was suddenly accosted by a loud and alarmed voice:

"For God's sake, sir, look out, or,——"

The sentence was broken off, the intended warning came too late, our hero staggered back a few steps, and fell, stunned and motionless, against the stable door. Unconsciously he had passed just behind the heels of the stranger's horse, which being by no means in good humour with the clumsy manœuvres of his *shampooer*, the ostler, had taken advantage of the opportunity presented to him of working off his irritability, and had consequently inflicted a severe kick upon the right shoulder of Mr. C. L.

The stranger, honoured by the landlady with the name and title of Squire Mordaunt, was in the yard at the moment. He hastened towards the sufferer, who, as yet, was scarcely sensible, and led him into the house. The surgeon of the village was sent for, and appeared. This disciple of Galen, commonly known by the name of Jeremiah Bossolton, was a gentleman considerably more inclined to breadth than length. He was exactly five feet one inch in height, but thick and solid as a milestone; a wig of modern cut, carefully curled and powdered, gave somewhat of a modish and therefore unseemly grace to a solemn eye; a mouth drawn down at the corners; a nose that had somthing in it exceedingly consequential; eyebrows sage and shaggy; ears large and fiery; and a chin that would have done honor to a mandarin. Now Mr. Jeremiah Bossolton had a certain peculiarity of speech to which I shall find it difficult to do justice. Nature had impressed upon his mind a prodigious love of the grandiloquent; Mr. Bossolton, therefore, disdained the exact language of the vulgar, and built unto himself a lofty fabric of words in which his sense managed very frequently to lose itself. Moreover, upon beginning a sentence of peculiar dignity, Mr. Bossolton was, it must be confessed, sometimes at a loss to conclude it in a period worthy of the commencement; and this caprice of nature, which had endowed him with more words than thoughts (necessity is, indeed, the mother of invention), drove him

into a very ingenious method of remedying the deficiency; this was simply the plan of repeating the sense by inverting the sentence.

"How long a period of time," said Mr. Bossolton, "has elapsed since this deeply-to-be-regretted and seriously-to-be-investigated accident occurred?"

"Not many minutes," said Mordaunt; "make no further delay, I beseech you, but examine the arm; it is not broken, I trust?"

"In this world, Mr. Mordaunt," said the practitioner, bowing very low, for the person he addressed was of the most ancient lineage in the county, "in this world, Mr. Mordaunt, even at the earliest period of civilisation, delay in matters of judgment has ever been considered of such vital importance, and—and such important vitality, that we find it inculcated in the proverbs of the Greeks, and the sayings of the Chaldeans, as a principle of the most expedient utility, and—and—the most useful expediency!"

"Mr. Bossolton," said Mordaunt, in a tone of remarkable and even artificial softness and civility, "have the kindness *immediately* to examine this gentleman's bruises."

Mr. Bossolton looked up to the calm but haughty face of the speaker, and, without a moment's hesitation, proceeded to handle the arm, which was already stripped for his survey.

"It frequently occurs," said Mr. Bossolton, "in the course of my profession, that the forcible, sudden, and vehement application of any hard substance, like the hoof of a quadruped, to the soft, tender, and carniferous parts of the human frame, such as the arm, occasions a pain—a pang, I should rather say—of the intensest acuteness, and—and of the acutest intensity."

"Pray, Mr. Bossolton, is the bone broken?" asked Mordaunt.

By this time the patient, who had been hitherto in that languor which extreme pain always produces at first, especially on young frames, was sufficiently recovered to

mark and reply to the kind solicitude of the last speaker: "I thank you, sir," said he with a smile, "for your anxiety, but I feel that the bone is *not* broken, the muscles are a little hurt—that is all."

"Young gentleman," said Mr. Bossolton, "you must permit me to say that they who have all their lives been employed in the pursuit, and the investigation, and the analysis of certain studies are in general better acquainted with those studies than they who have neither given them any importance of consideration—nor—nor any consideration of importance. Establishing this as my hypothesis, I shall now proceed to—"

"Apply immediate remedies, if you please, Mr. Bossolton," interrupted Mr. Mordaunt, in that sweet and honied tone which somehow or other always silenced even the garrulous practitioner.

Driven into taciturnity, Mr. Bossolton again inspected the arm, and proceeded to urge the application of liniments and bandages, which he promised to prepare with the most solicitudinous despatch, and the most despatchful solicitude.

CHAPTER V.

Your name, Sir!
Ha! my name, you say—my name?
'Tis well—my name—is—nay, I must consider.—*Pedrillo.*

THIS accident occasioned a delay of some days in the plans of the young gentleman, for whom we trust, very soon, both for our own convenience and that of our reader, to find a fitting appellation.

Mr. Mordaunt, after seeing every attention paid to him both surgical and hospitable, took his departure with a promise to call the next day; leaving behind him a strong impression of curiosity and interest to serve our hero as

some mental occupation until his return. The bonny landlady came up in a new cap, with blue ribbons, in the course of the evening, to pay a visit of inquiry to the handsome patient, who was removed from the Griffin, No. 4, to the Dragon, No. 8—a room whose merits were exactly in proportion to its number,—viz., twice as great as those of No. 4.

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Taptape, with a courtesy, "I trust you find yourself better."

"At *this* moment I do," said the gallant youth, with a significant air.

"Hem," quoth the landlady.

A pause ensued. In spite of the compliment, a certain suspicion suddenly darted across the mind of the hostess. Strong as are the prepossessions of the sex, those of the profession are much stronger.

"Honest folk," thought the landlady, "don't travel with their initials only; the last *Whitehall Evening* was full of shocking accounts of swindlers and cheats; and I gave nine pounds odd shillings for the silver teapot John has brought him up—as if the delft one was not good enough for a foot traveller!"

Pursuing these ideas, Mrs. Taptape, looking bashfully down, said,

"By the by, sir, Mr. Bossolton asked me what name he should put down in his book for the medicines; what would you please me to say, sir?"

"Mr. who?" said the youth, elevating his eyebrows.

"Mr. Bossolton, sir, the apothecary."

"Oh! Bossolton! very odd name that—not near so pretty as—dear me, what a beautiful cap that is of yours!" said the young gentleman.

"Lord, sir, do you think so? The ribbon *is* pretty enough; but—but, as I was saying, what name shall I tell Mr. Bossolton to put in his book?" This, thought Mrs. Taptape, is coming to the point.

"Well!" said the youth slowly, and as if in a profound

reverie, "well, Bossolton is certainly the most singular name I ever heard; he does right to put it in a book—it is quite a curiosity! is he clever?"

"Very, sir," said the landlady, somewhat sharply; "but it is *your* name, not *his*, that he wishes to put into his book."

"Mine?" said the youth—who appeared to have been seeking to gain time in order to answer a query which most men find requires very little deliberation—"mine, you say; *my* name is Linden—Clarence Linden—you understand?"

"What a pretty name!" thought the landlady's daughter, who was listening at the keyhole; "but how *could* he admire that odious cap of *Ma's!*"

"And, now, landlady, I wish you would send up my boxes; and get me a newspaper, if you please."

"Yes, sir," said the landlady, and she rose to retire.

"I do not think," said the youth to himself, "that I could have hit on a prettier name—and so novel a one too!—Clarence Linden—why, if I were that pretty girl at the bar I could fall in love with the very words. Shakspeare was quite wrong when he said—

'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.'

A rose by *any* name would not smell as sweet; if a rose's name was Jeremiah Bossolton, for instance, it would not, to my nerves at least, smell of anything but an apothecary's shop!"

When Mordaunt called the next morning, he found Clarence much better, and carelessly turning over various books, part of the contents of the luggage superscribed C. L. A book of whatever description was among the few companions for whom Mordaunt had neither fastidiousness nor reserve; and the sympathy of taste between him and the sufferer gave rise to a conversation less cold and commonplace than it might otherwise have been. And when Mordaunt, after a stay of some length, rose to depart, he pressed Linden to return his visit before he left that part

of the country; his place, he added, was only about five miles distant from W——. Linden, greatly interested in his visitor, was not slow in accepting the invitation, and, perhaps for the first time in his life, Mordaunt was shaking hands with a stranger he had only known two days.

CHAPTER VI.

While yet a child, and long before his time
He had perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness.
* * * * *
But eagerly he read, and read again.
* * * * *
Yet still uppermost
Nature was at his heart, as if he felt,
Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
In all things that from her sweet influence
Might seek to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.

WORDSWORTH.

ALGERNON MORDAUNT was the last son of an old and honourable race, which had centuries back numbered princes in its line. His parents had had many children, but all (save Algernon, the youngest) died in their infancy. His mother perished in giving him birth. Constitutional infirmity and the care of mercenary nurses contributed to render Algernon a weakly and delicate child; hence came a taste for loneliness and a passion for study; and from these sprung, on the one hand, the fastidiousness and reserve, which render us apparently unamiable, and, on the other, the loftiness of spirit and the kindness of heart which are the best and earliest gifts of literature, and more than counterbalance our deficiencies in the "minor morals" due to society by their tendency to increase our attention

to the greater ones belonging to mankind. Mr. Mordaunt was a man of luxurious habits and gambling propensities: wedded to London, he left the house of his ancestors to moulder into desertion and decay; but to this home Algernon was constantly consigned during his vacations from school; and its solitude and cheerlessness gave to a disposition naturally melancholy and thoughtful, those colours which subsequent events were calculated to deepen, not efface.

Truth obliges us to state, despite our partiality to Mordaunt, that, when he left his school, after a residence of six years, it was with the bitter distinction of having been the most unpopular boy in it. Why, nobody could exactly explain, for his severest enemies could not accuse him of ill-nature, cowardice, or avarice, and these make the three capital offences of a schoolboy; but Algernon Mordaunt had already acquired the knowledge of himself, and could explain the cause, though with a bitter and swelling heart. His ill health, his long residence at home, his unfriended and almost orphan situation, his early habits of solitude and reserve, all these, so calculated to make the spirit shrink within itself, made him, on his entrance at school, if not unsocial, *appear* so: this was the primary reason of his unpopularity; the second was that he perceived, for he was sensitive (and consequently acute) to the extreme, the misfortune of his manner, and in his wish to rectify it, it became doubly unprepossessing; to reserve, it now added embarrassment, to coldness, gloom; and the pain he felt in addressing or being addressed by another, was naturally and necessarily reciprocal, for the effects of sympathy are nowhere so wonderful, yet so invisible, as in the manners.

By degrees he shunned the intercourse which had for him nothing but distress, and his volatile acquaintances were perhaps the first to set him the example. Often in his solitary walks he stopped afar off to gaze upon the sports, which none ever solicited him to share; and as the shout of laughter and of happy hearts came, peal after

peal, upon his ear, he turned enviously, yet not malignantly, away, with tears, which not all his pride could curb, and muttered to himself, "And these, these hate me!"

There are two feelings common to all high or affectionate natures, that of extreme susceptibility to opinion and that of extreme bitterness at its injustice. These feelings were Mordaunt's; but the keen edge which one blow injures, the repetition blunts: and by little and little, Algernon became not only accustomed, but, as he persuaded himself, indifferent, to his want of popularity; his step grew more lofty, and his address more collected, and that which was once diffidence gradually hardened into pride.

His residence at the university was neither without honour nor profit. A college life was then, as now, either the most retired or the most social of all others; we need scarcely say which it was to Mordaunt, but his was the age when solitude is desirable, and when the closet forms the mind better than the world. Driven upon itself, his intellect became inquiring and its resources profound; admitted to their inmost recesses, he revelled among the treasures of ancient lore, and in his dreams of the Nymph and Naïad, or his researches after truth in the deep wells of the Stagyrite or the golden fountains of Plato, he forgot the loneliness of his lot, and exhausted the hoarded enthusiasm of his soul.

But his mind, rather thoughtful than imaginative, found no idol like "Divine Philosophy." It delighted to plunge itself into the mazes of metaphysical investigation—to trace the springs of the intellect—to connect the arcana of the universe—to descend into the darkest caverns, or to wind through the minutest mysteries of nature, and rise, step by step, to that arduous elevation on which Thought stands dizzy and confused, looking beneath upon a clouded earth, and above, upon an unfathomable heaven.

Rarely wandering from his chamber, known personally to few, and intimately by none, Algernon yet left behind

him at the university the most remarkable reputation of his day. He had obtained some of the highest of academical honours, and by that proverbial process of vulgar minds which ever frames the magnificent from the unknown,—the seclusion in which he lived and the recondite nature of his favourite pursuits attached to his name a still greater celebrity and interest than all the orthodox and regular dignities he had acquired. There are few men who do not console themselves for not being generally loved, if they can reasonably hope that they are generally esteemed. Mordaunt had now grown reconciled to himself and to his kind. He had opened to his interest a world in his own breast, and it consoled him for his mortification in the world without. But, better than this, his habits as well as studies had strengthened the principles and confirmed the nobility of his mind. He was not, it is true, more kind, more benevolent, more upright than before; but those virtues now emanated from principle—not emotion: and principle to the mind is what a free constitution is to a people: without that principle, or that free constitution, the one may be for the moment as good—the other as happy, but we cannot tell how long the goodness and the happiness will continue.

On leaving the university, his father sent for him to London. He staid there a short time, and mingled partially in its festivities; but the pleasures of English dissipation have for a century been the same, heartless without gaiety, and dull without refinement. Nor could Mordaunt, the most fastidious, yet warm-hearted of human beings, reconcile either his tastes or his affections to the cold insipidities of patrician society. His father's habits and evident distresses, deepened his disgust to his situation; for the habits were incurable, and the distresses increasing; and nothing but a circumstance, which Mordaunt did not then understand, prevented the final sale of an estate already little better than a pompous incumbrance.

It was therefore with the half painful, half pleasurable

sensation with which we avoid contemplating a ruin we cannot prevent, that Mordaunt set out upon that continental tour deemed then so necessary a part of education. His father, on taking leave of him, seemed deeply affected. "Go, my son," said he, "may God bless you, and not punish me too severely. I have wronged you deeply, and I cannot bear to look upon your face."

To these words Algernon attached a general, but they cloaked a peculiar, meaning: in three years, he returned to England—his father had been dead some months, and the signification of his parting address was already deciphered—but of this hereafter.

In his travels, Mordaunt encountered an Englishman, whose name I will not yet mention; a person of great reputed wealth—a merchant, yet a man of pleasure—a voluptuary in life, yet a saint in reputation—or, to abstain from the antithetical analysis of a character which will not be corporeally presented to the reader till our tale is considerably advanced—one who drew from nature a singular combination of shrewd, but false conclusions, and a peculiar philosophy, destined hereafter to contrast the colours and prove the practical utility of that which was espoused by Mordaunt.

There can be no education in which the lessons of the world do not form a share. Experience, in expanding Algernon's powers, had ripened his virtues. Nor had the years which had converted knowledge into wisdom failed in imparting polish to refinement. His person had acquired a greater grace and his manners an easier dignity than before. His noble and generous mind had worked its impress upon his features and his mien; and those who could overcome the first coldness and shrinking hauteur of his address found it required no minute examination to discover the real expression of the eloquent eye, and the kindling lip.

He had not been long returned before he found two enemies to his tranquillity—the one was love, the other appeared in the more formidable guise of a claimant to his

estate. Before Algernon was aware of the nature of the latter he went to consult with his lawyer.

"If the claim be just, I shall not, of course, proceed to law," said Mordaunt.

"But without the estate, sir, you have nothing!"

"True," said Algernon, calmly.

But the claim was not just, and to the he went.

In this lawsuit, however, he had one assistant in an old relation, who had seen, indeed, but very little of him, but who compassionated his circumstances, and, above all, hated his opponent. This relation was rich and childless; and there were not wanting those who predicted that his money would ultimately discharge the mortgages, and repair the house, of the young representative of the Mordaunt honours. But the old kinsman was obstinate—self-willed—and under the absolute dominion of patrician pride; and it was by no means improbable that the independence of Mordaunt's character would soon create a disunion between them, by clashing against the peculiarities of his relation's temper.

It was a clear and sunny morning when Linden, tolerably recovered of his hurt, set out upon a sober and aged pony, which, after some natural pangs of shame, he had hired of his landlord, to Mordaunt Court.

Mordaunt's house was situated in the midst of a wild and extensive park, surrounded with woods, and interspersed with trees of the stateliest growth, now scattered into irregular groups, now marshalled into sweeping avenues; while, ever and anon, Linden caught glimpses of a rapid and brawling rivulet, which, in many a slight but sounding waterfall, gave a music strange and spirit-like to the thick copses and forest glades through which it went exulting on its way. The deer lay half concealed by the fern among which they couched, turning their stately crests towards the stranger, but not stirring from their rest; while from the summit of beeches, which would have shamed the pavilion of Tityrus, the rooks—those

monks of the feathered people—were loud in their confused, but not displeasing, confabulations.

As Linden approached the house, he was struck with the melancholy air of desolation which spread over and around it: fragments of stone, above which clomb the rank weed, insolently proclaiming the triumph of nature's meanest offspring over the wrecks of ark; a moat dried up, a railing once of massive gilding, intended to fence a lofty terrace on the right from the incursions of the deer, but which, shattered and decayed, now seemed to ask, with the satirist,—

> To what end did our lavish ancestors
> Erect of old these stately piles of ours?

—a chapel on the left, perfectly in ruins,—all appeared strikingly to denote that time had outstript fortune, and that the years, which alike hallow and destroy, had broken the consequence, in deepening the antiquity, "of the House of Mordaunt.

The building itself agreed but too well with the tokens of decay around it; most of the windows were shut up, and the shutters of dark oak, richly gilt, contrasted forcibly with the shattered panes and mouldered framing of the glass. It was a house of irregular architecture. Originally built in the fifteenth century, it had received its last improvement, with the most lavish expense, during the reign of Anne; and it united the Gallic magnificence of the latter period with the strength and grandeur of the former; it was in a great part overgrown with ivy, and, where that insidious ornament had not reached, the signs of decay, and even ruin, were fully visible. The sun itself, bright and cheering as it shone over nature, making the green sod glow like emeralds, and the rivulet flash in its beam, like one of those streams of real light imagined by Swedenborg in his visions of heaven, and clothing tree and fell, brake and hillock, with the lavish hues of infant summer;—the sun itself only made more desolate, because more conspicuous,

the venerable fabric, which the youthful traveller frequently paused more accurately to survey, and its laughing and sportive beams playing over chink and crevice, seemed almost as insolent and untimeous as the mirth of the young, mocking the silent grief of some grey-headed and solitary mourner.

Clarence had now reached the porch, and the sound of the shrill bell he touched rung with a strange note through the general stillness of the place. A single servant appeared, and ushered Clarence through a screen hall, hung round with relics of armour, and ornamented on the side opposite the music gallery with a solitary picture of gigantic size, and exhibiting the full length of the gaunt person and sable steed of that Sir Piers de Mordaunt who had so signalised himself in the field in which Henry of Richmond changed his coronet for a crown. Through this hall Clarence was led to a small chamber clothed with uncouth and tattered arras, in which, seemingly immersed in papers, he found the owner of the domain.

"Your studies," said Linden, after the salutations of the day, "seem to harmonise with the venerable antiquity of your home;" and he pointed to the crabbed characters and faded ink of the papers on the table.

"So they ought," answered Mordaunt, with a faint smile; "for they are called from their quiet archives in order to support my struggle for that home. But I fear the struggle is in vain, and that the quibbles of law will transfer into other hands a possession I am foolish enough to value the more from my inability to maintain it."

Something of this Clarence had before learnt from the communicative gossip of his landlady; and less desirous to satisfy his curiosity than to lead the conversation from a topic which he felt must be so unwelcome to Mordaunt, he expressed a wish to see the state apartments of the house. With something of shame at the neglect they had necessarily experienced, and something of pride at the splendour which no neglect could efface, Mordaunt yielded to the

request, and led the way up a staircase of black oak, the walls and ceiling of which were covered with frescoes of Italian art, to a suite of apartments in which time and dust seemed the only tenants. Lingeringly did Clarence gaze upon the rich velvet, the costly mirrors, the motley paintings of a hundred ancestors, and the antique cabinets, containing, among the most hoarded relics of the Mordaunt race, curiosities which the hereditary enthusiasm of a line of cavaliers had treasured as the most sacred of heirlooms, and which, even to the philosophical mind of Mordaunt, possessed a value he did not seek to minutely to analyse. Here was the goblet from which the first prince of Tudor had drunk after the field of Bosworth. Here the ring with which the chivalrous Francis the First had rewarded a single feat of that famous Robert de Mordaunt, who, as a poor but adventurous cadet of the house, had brought to the "first gentleman of France" the assistance of his sword. Here was the glove which Sir Walter had received from the royal hand of Elizabeth, and worn in the lists upon a crest which the lance of no antagonist in that knightly court could abase. And here, more sacred than all, because connected with the memory of misfortune, was a small box of silver which the last king of a fated line had placed in the hands of the grey-headed descendant of that Sir Walter after the battle of the Boyne, saying, "Keep this, Sir Everard Mordaunt, for the sake of one who has purchased the luxury of gratitude at the price of a throne!"

As Clarence glanced from these relics to the figure of Mordaunt, who stood at a little distance leaning against the window, with arms folded on his breast, and with eyes abstractedly wandering over the noble woods and extended park, which spread below, he could not but feel that if birth had indeed the power of setting seal upon the form, it was never more conspicuous than in the broad front and lofty air of the last descendant of the race by whose memorials he was surrounded. Touched by the fallen fortunes of Mordaunt, and interested by the uncertainty

which the chances of law threw over his future fate, Clarence could not resist exclaiming, with some warmth and abruptness—

"And by what subterfuge, or cavil, does the present claimant of these estates hope to dislodge their rightful possessor?"

"Why," answered Mordaunt, "it is a long story in detail, but briefly told in epitome. My father was a man whose habits greatly exceeded his fortune, and a few months after his death, Mr. Vavasour, a distant relation, produced a paper, by which it appeared that my father had, for a certain sum of ready money, disposed of his estates to this Mr. Vavasour, upon condition that they should not be claimed, nor the treaty divulged, till after his death; the reason for this proviso seems to have been the shame my father felt for his exchange, and his fear of the censures of that world to which he was always devoted."

"But how unjust to you!" said Clarence.

"Not so much so as it seems," said Mordaunt deprecatingly; "for I was then but a sickly boy and according to the physicians, and I sincerely believe according also to my poor father's belief, almost certain of a premature death. In that case Vavasour would have been the nearest heir; and this expectancy, by the by, joined to the mortgages on the property, made the sum given ridiculously disproportioned to the value of the estate. I must confess that the news came upon me like a thunderbolt. I should have yielded up possession immediately, but was informed by my lawyers that my father had no legal right to dispose of the property; the discussion of that right forms the ground of the present lawsuit. But," continued Mordaunt, proudly, yet mournfully, "I am prepared for the worst; if, indeed, I should call that the worst which can affect neither intellect, nor health, nor character, nor conscience."

Clarence was silent, and Mordaunt, after a brief pause, once more resumed his guidance. Their tour ended in a

large library filled with books, and this, Mordaunt informed his guest, was his chosen sitting-room.

An old carved table was covered with works which for the most part possessed for the young mind of Clarence, more accustomed to imagine than reflect, but a very feeble attraction; on looking over them, he, however, found, half hid by a huge folio of Hobbes, and another of Locke, a volume of Milton's poems; this paved the way to a conversation, in which both had an equal interest, for both were enthusiastic in the character and genius of that wonderful man, for whom "the divine and solemn countenance of Freedom" was dearer than the light of day, and whose solitary spell, accomplishing what the whole family of earth once vainly began upon the plain of Shinar, has built of materials more imperishable than "slime and brick," "a city and a tower whose summit *has* reached to heaven."

It was with mutual satisfaction that Mordaunt and his guest continued their commune, till the hour of dinner was announced to them by a bell, which, formerly intended as an alarum, now served the peaceful purpose of a more agreeable summons.

The same servant who had admitted Clarence ushered them through the great hall into the dining-room, and was their solitary attendant during their repast.

The temper of Mordaunt was essentially grave and earnest, and his conversation almost invariably took the tone of his mind; this made their conference turn upon less minute and commonplace topics than one between such new acquaintances, especially of different ages, usually does.

"You will positively go to London to-morrow, then?" said Mordaunt, as the servant, removing the appurtenances of dinner, left them alone.

"Positively," answered Clarence. "I go there to carve my own fortunes, and, to say truth, I am impatient to begin."

Mordaunt looked earnestly at the frank face of the

speaker, and wondered that one so young, so well-educated, and, from his air and manner, evidently of gentle blood, should appear so utterly thrown upon his own resources.

"I wish you success," said he, after a pause; "and it is a noble part of the organization of this world, that by increasing those riches which are beyond fortune, we do in general take the surest method of obtaining those which are in its reach."

Clarence looked inquiringly at Mordaunt, who, perceiving it, continued, "I see that I should explain myself farther. I will do so by using the thoughts of a mind not the least beautiful and accomplished which this country has produced. 'Of all which belongs to us,' said Bolingbroke, 'the least valuable parts can alone fall under the will of others. *Whatever is best is safest;* lies out of the reach of human power; can neither be given nor taken away. Such is this great and beautiful work of nature, the world. Such is the mind of man, which contemplates and admires the world whereof it makes the noblest part. These are inseparably ours, and as long as we remain in one we shall enjoy the other.'"

"Beautiful, indeed!" exclaimed Clarence with the enthusiasm of a young and pure heart, to which every loftier sentiment is always beautiful.

"And true as beautiful!" said Mordaunt. "Nor is this all, for the mind can even dispense with that world, 'of which it forms a part,' if we can create within it a world still more inaccessible to chance. But (and I now return to and explain my former observation) the means by which we can effect this *peculiar* world can be rendered equally subservient to our advancement and prosperity in that which we share in common with our race; for the riches which by the aid of wisdom we heap up in the storehouses of the mind are, though not the only, the most customary coin by which external prosperity is bought. So that the philosophy, which can alone give independence to ourselves,

becomes, under the name of honesty, the best policy in commerce with our kind."

In conversation of this nature, which the sincerity and lofty enthusiasm of Mordaunt rendered interesting to Clarence despite the distaste to the serious so ordinary to youth, the hours passed on, till the increasing evening warned Linden to depart.

"Adieu!" said he to Mordaunt. "I know not when we shall meet again, but if we ever do, I will make it my boast, whether in prosperity or misfortune, not to have forgotten the pleasure I have this day enjoyed!"

Returning his guest's farewell with a warmth unusual to his manner, Mordaunt followed him to the door, and saw him depart.

Fate ordained that they should pursue in very different paths their several destinies; nor did it afford them an opportunity of meeting again, till years and events had severely tried the virtue of one, and materially altered the prospects of the other.

The next morning Clarence Linden was on his road to London.

CHAPTER VII.

"Upon my word," cries Jones, "thou art a very odd fellow, and I like thy humour extremely."—FIELDING.

THE rumbling and jolting vehicle which conveyed Clarence to the metropolis, stopped at the door of a tavern in Holborn. Linden was ushered into a close coffee-room, and presented with a bill of fare. While he was deliberating between the respective merits of mutton chops and beefsteaks, a man with a brown coat, brown breeches, and a brown wig, walked into the room; he cast a curious glance at Clarence and then turned to the waiter.

"A pair of slippers!"

"Yes, sir," and the waiter disappeared.

"I suppose," said the brown gentleman to Clarence, "I suppose, sir, you are the gentleman just come to town?"

"You are right, sir," said Clarence.

"Very well, very well indeed," resumed the stranger, musingly. "I took the liberty of looking at your boxes in the passage; I knew a lady, sir, a relation of yours, I think."

"Sir!" exclaimed Linden, colouring violently.

"At least I suppose, for her name was just the same as yours, only, at least, one letter difference between them: yours is *Linden*, I see, sir; hers was *Minden*. Am I right in my conjecture that you are related to her?"

"Sir," answered Clarence, gravely, "notwithstanding the similarity of our names, we are not related."

"Very extraordinary," replied the stranger.

"Very," repeated Linden.

"I had the honour, sir," said the brown gentleman, "to make Mrs. Minden many presents of value, and I should have been very happy to have obliged you in the same manner, had you been in any way connected with that worthy gentlewoman."

"You are very kind," said Linden, "you are very kind; and since such were your intentions, I believe I *must* have been connected with Mrs. Minden. At all events, as you justly observe, there is only the difference of a letter between our names;—a discrepancy too slight, I am sure, to alter your benevolent intentions."

Here the waiter returned with the slippers.

The stranger slowly unbuttoned his gaiters. "Sir," said he to Linden, "we will renew our conversation presently."

No sooner had the generous friend of Mrs. Minden deposited his feet in their easy tenements, than he quitted the room.

"Pray," said Linden to the waiter, when he had ordered his simple repast, "who is that gentleman in brown?"

"*Mr.* Brown," replied the waiter.

"And who, or what is Mr. Brown?" asked our hero.

Before the waiter could reply, Mr. Brown returned, with a large bandbox, carefully enveloped in a blue handkerchief. "You come from ——, sir?" said Mr. Brown, quietly seating himself at the same table as Linden.

"No, sir, I do not."

"From ——, then?"

"No, sir,—from W——."

"W——?—ay—well, I knew a lady with a name very like W—— (the late Lady Waddilove) extremely well. I made her some valuable presents—her ladyship was very sensible of it."

"I don't doubt it, sir," replied Clarence; "such instances of general beneficence rarely occur!"

"I have some magnificent relics of her ladyship in this box," returned Mr. Brown.

"Really! then she was no less generous than yourself, I persume?"

"Yes, her ladyship *was* remarkably generous. About a week before she died (the late Lady Waddilove was quite sensible of her danger), she called me to her—'Brown,' said she, 'you are a good creature; I have had my most valuable things from you. I am not ungrateful; I will leave you—*my maid!* She is as clever as you are and as good.' I took the hint, sir, and married. It was an excellent bargain. My wife is a charming woman; she entirely fitted up Mrs. Minden's wardrobe and I furnished the house. Mrs. Minden was greatly indebted to us."

"Heaven help me!" thought Clarence, "the man is certainly mad."

The waiter entered with the dinner; and Mr. Brown, who seemed to have a delicate aversion to any conversation in the presence of the Ganymede of the Holborn tavern, immediately ceased his communications; meanwhile, Clarence took the opportunity to survey him more minutely than he had hitherto done.

His new acquaintance was in age about forty-eight; in

stature, rather under the middle height; and thin, dried, withered, yet muscular withal, like a man who, in stinting his stomach for the sake of economy, does not the less enjoy the power of undergoing any fatigue or exertion that an object of adequate importance may demand. We have said already that he was attired, like twilight, "in a suit of sober brown;" and there was a formality, a precision, and a cat-like sort of cleanliness in his garb, which savoured strongly of the respectable coxcombry of the counting-house. His face was lean, it is true, but not emaciated; and his complexion, sallow and adust, harmonised well with the colours of his clothing. An eye of the darkest hazel, sharp, shrewd, and flashing at times, especially at the mention of the euphonious name of Lady Waddilove—a name frequently upon the lips of the inheritor of her Abigail—with a fire that might be called brilliant, was of that modest species which can seldom encounter the straightforward glance of another; on the contrary, it seemed restlessly uneasy in any settled place, and wandered from ceiling to floor, and corner to corner, with an inquisitive, though apparently careless glance, as if seeking for something to admire or haply to appropriate; it also seemed to be the especial care of Mr. Brown to veil, as far as he was able, the vivacity of his looks beneath an expression of open and unheeding good nature, an expression strangely enough contrasting with the closeness and sagacity which nature had indelibly stamped upon features pointed, aquiline, and impressed with a strong mixture of the Judaical physiognomy. The manner and bearing of this gentleman partook of the same undecided character as his countenance; they seemed to be struggling between civility and importance; a real eagerness to make the acquaintance of the person he addressed, and an assumed recklessness of the advantages which that acquaintance could bestow;—it was like the behaviour of a man who is desirous of having the best possible motives imputed to him, but is fearful lest that desire should not be utterly fulfilled. At the first

glance you would have pledged yourself for his respectability; at the second, you would have half suspected him to be a rogue; and, after you have been half an hour in his company, you would confess yourself in the obscurest doubt which was the better guess, the first or the last.

"Waiter!" said Mr. Brown, looking enviously at the viands upon which Linden, having satisfied his curiosity, was now, with all the appetite of youth, regaling himself. "Waiter!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Bring me a sandwich—and—and, waiter, see that I have plenty of—plenty of——"

"What, sir?"

"Plenty of mustard, waiter."

"Mustard" (and here Mr. Brown addressed himself to Clarence) "is a very wonderful assistance to the digestion. By the by, sir, if you want any curiously fine mustard, I can procure you some pots quite capital—a great favour, though—they were smuggled from France, especially for the use of the late Lady Waddilove."

"Thank you," said Linden, drily; "I shall be very happy to accept anything you may wish to offer me."

Mr. Brown took a pocket-book from his pouch. "Six pots of mustard, sir—shall I say six?"

"As many as you please," replied Clarence; and Mr. Brown wrote down "Six pots of French mustard."

"You are a very young gentleman, sir," said Mr. Brown, "probably intended for some profession—I don't mean to be impertinent, but if I can be of any assistance—"

"You can, sir," replied Linden, "and immediately—have the kindness to ring the bell."

Mr. Brown, with a grave smile, did as he was desired; the waiter re-entered, and receiving a whispered order from Clarence, again disappeared.

"What profession did you say, sir?" renewed Mr. Brown, artfully.

"None!" replied Linden.

"Oh, very well—very well indeed. Then as an idle, independent gentleman, you will of course be a bit of a beau—want some shirts, possibly—fine cravats, too—gentlemen wear a particular pattern now—gloves, gold, or shall I say *gilt* chain, watch and seals, a ring or two, and a snuff-box?"

"Sir, you are vastly obliging," said Clarence, in undisguised surprise.

"Not at all, I would do anything for a relation of Mrs. Minden."

The waiter re-entered; "Sir," said he to Linden, "your room is quite ready."

"I am glad to hear it," said Clarence, rising. "Mr. Brown I have the honour of wishing you a good evening."

"Stay, sir—stay; you have not looked into these things belonging to the late Lady Waddilove."

"Another time," said Clarence, hastily.

"To-morrow, at ten o'clock," muttered Mr. Brown.

"I am exceedingly glad I have got rid of that fellow," said Linden to himself, as he stretched his limbs in his easy-chair, and drank off the last glass of his pint of port. "If I have not already seen, I have already guessed, enough of the world, to know that you are to look to your pockets when a man offers you a present; they who 'give,' also 'take away.' So here I am in London, with an order for £1000 in my purse, the wisdom of Dr. Latinas in my head, and the health of eighteen in my veins; will it not be my own fault if I do not both *enjoy* and *make* myself——"

And then, yielding to meditations of future success, partaking strongly of the inexperienced and sanguine temperament of the soliloquist, Clarence passed the hours till his pillow summoned him to dreams no less ardent, and perhaps no less unreal.

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh! how I long to be employed.—*Every Man in his Humour.*

Clarence was sitting the next morning over the very unsatisfactory breakfast which tea made out of broomsticks and cream out of chalk (adulteration thrived even in 17—) afforded, when the waiter threw open the door, and announced Mr. Brown.

"Just in time, sir, you perceive," said Mr. Brown; "I am punctuality itself: exactly a quarter of a minute to ten. I have brought you the pots of French mustard, and I have some very valuable articles which you *must* want, besides."

"Thank you, sir," said Linden, not well knowing what to say; and Mr. Brown, untying a silk handkerchief, produced three shirts, two pots of pomatum, a tobacco canister with a German pipe, four pair of silk stockings, two gold seals, three rings, and a stuffed parrot!

"Beautiful articles these, sir," said Mr. Brown, with a snuffle "of inward sweetness long drawn out," and expressive of great admiration of his offered treasures; "beautiful articles, sir, ar'n't they?"

"Very, the parrot in particular," said Clarence.

"Yes, sir," returned Mr. Brown, "the parrot is indeed quite a jewel; it belonged to the late Lady Waddilove; I offer it to you with considerable regret, for——"

"Oh!" interrupted Clarence, "pray do not rob yourself of such a jewel, it really is of no use to me."

"I know that, sir—I know that," replied Mr. Brown; "but it will be of use to your friends; it will be inestimable to any old aunt, sir, any maiden lady living at Hackney, any curious elderly gentleman fond of a knick-knack. I knew you would know some one to send it to as a present, even though you should not want it yourself."

"Bless me!" thought Linden, "was there ever such generosity? Not content with providing for my wants, he extends his liberality even to any possible relations I may possess!"

Mr. Brown now re-tied "the beautiful articles" in his handkerchief. "Shall I leave them, sir?" said he.

"Why, really," said Clarence, "I thought yesterday that you were in jest; but you must be aware that I cannot accept presents from any gentleman so much—so much a stranger to me as you are."

"No, sir, I *am* aware of that," replied Mr. Brown; "and in order to remove the unpleasantness of such a feeling, sir, on your part—merely in order to do that, I assure you with no other view, sir, in the world—I have just noted down the articles on this piece of paper; but as you will perceive, at a price so low, as still to make them actually presents in everything but the name. Oh, sir, I perfectly understand your delicacy, and would not for the world violate it."

So saying, Mr. Brown put a paper into Linden's hands, the substance of which a very little more experience of the world would have enabled Clarence to foresee: it ran thus:—

CLARENCE LINDEN, ESQ., Dr.

TO MR. MORRIS BROWN.

	£	s.	d.
To Six Pots of French Mustard	£1	4	0
To Three Superfine Holland Shirts, with Cambric Bosoms, complete	4	1	0
To Two Pots of Superior French Pomatum	0	10	0
To a Tobacco Canister of enamelled Tin, with a finely executed head of the Pretender: slight flaw in the same	0	12	6
To a German Pipe, second hand, as good as new, belonging to the late Lady Waddilove	1	18	0
To Four Pair of Black Silk Hose, ditto, belonging to her Ladyship's husband	2	8	0
Carried forward	10	13	6

Brought forward	£10	13	6
To Two Superfine Embossed Gold Watch Seals, with A Classical Motto and Device to each, *viz.*, Mouse Trap, and "Prenez Garde," to one, and "Who the devil can this be from?"[1] to the other.....	1	1	0
To a remarkably fine Antique Ring, having the head of a Monkey.....	0	16	6
A ditto, with blue stones.....	0	12	6
A ditto, with green ditto.....	0	12	6
A Stuffed Green Parrot, a remarkable favourite of the late Lady W.....	2	2	0
Sum Total.....	15	18	0
Deduction for Ready Money.....	0	13	6
	15	4	6
Mr Brown's Profits for Brokerage.....	1	10	0
Sum Total.....	£16	14	6

Received of Clarence Linden, Esq, this day of 17—

It would have been no unamusing study to watch the expression of Clarence's face as it lengthened over each article until he had reached the final conclusion. He then carefully folded up the paper, restored it to Mr. Brown, with a low bow, and said, "Excuse me, sir, I will not take advantage of your generosity; keep your parrot and other treasures for some more worthy person. I cannot accept of what you are pleased to term your very valuable *presents!*"

"Oh, very well, very well," said Mr. Brown, pocketing the paper, and seeming perfectly unconcerned at the termination of his proposals; "perhaps I can serve you in some other way?"

"In none, I thank you," replied Linden.

"Just consider, sir!—you will want lodgings; I can find them for you cheaper than you can yourself; or perhaps you would prefer going into a nice, quiet, genteel family, where you can have both board and lodging, and be treated in every way as the pet child of the master?"

[1] One would not have thought these ingenious devices had been of so ancient a date as the year 17—.

A thought crossed Linden's mind. He was going to stay in town some time; he was ignorant of its ways; he had neither friends nor relations, at least none whom he could visit and consult; moreover, hotels, he knew, were expensive; lodgings, though cheaper, might, if tolerably comfortable, greatly exceed the sum prudence would allow him to expend: would not this plan proposed by Mr. Brown, of going into a 'nice quiet genteel family,' be the most advisable one he could adopt? The generous benefactor of the late and ever-to-be remembered Lady Waddilove perceived his advantage, and making the most of Clarence's hesitation, continued—

"I know of a charming little abode, sir, situated in the suburbs of London, quite *rus in urbe* as the scholars say; you can have a delightful little back parlour, looking out upon the garden, and all to yourself, I dare say."

"And pray, Mr. Brown," interrupted Linden, "what price do you think would be demanded for such enviable accommodation? If you offer me them as '*a present*,' I shall have nothing to say to them."

"Oh sir," answered Mr. Brown "the price will be a trifle—a mere trifle; but I will inquire, and let you know the exact sum in the course of the day—all they want is a respectable gentlemanlike lodger; and I am sure so near a relation of Mrs. Minden will, upon my recommendation, be received with avidity. Then you won't have any of these valuable articles, sir? You'll repent it, sir—take my word for it—hem!"

"Since," replied Clarence, drily, "your word appears of so much more value than your articles, pardon me, if I prefer taking the former instead of the latter."

Mr. Brown forced a smile,—"Well, sir, very well, very well indeed. You will not go out before two o'clock? and at that time I shall call upon you respecting the commission you have favoured me with."

"I will await you," said Clarence; and he bowed Mr. Brown out of the room.

"Now, really," said Linden to himself, as he paced the narrow limits of his apartment, "I do not see what better plan I can pursue—but let me well consider what is my ultimate object. A high step in the world's ladder!—how is this to be obtained? First, by the regular method of professions; but what profession should I adopt? The Church is incompatible with my object—the army and navy with my means. Next come the irregular methods of adventure and enterprise—such as marriage with a fortune"—here he paused and looked at the glass—"the speculation of a political pamphlet, or an ode to the minister—attendance on some dying miser of my own name, without a relation in the world—or, in short, any other mode of making money that may decently offer itself. Now, situated as I am, without a friend in this great city, I might as well purchase my experience at as cheap a rate and in as brief a time as possible, nor do I see any plan of doing so more promising than that proposed by Mr. Brown."

These and such like reflections, joined to the inspiriting pages of the *Newgate Calendar* and *The Covent Garden Magazine*, two works which Clarence dragged from their concealment under a black tea-tray, afforded him ample occupation till the hour of two, punctual to which time Mr. Morris Brown returned.

"Well, sir," said Clarence, "what is your report?"

The friend of the late Lady W. wiped his brow and gave three long sighs before he replied: "A long walk, sir—a very long walk I have had; but I have succeeded. No thanks, sir—no thanks—the lady, a most charming, delightful, amiable woman, will receive you with pleasure—you will have the use of a back parlour (as I said) all the morning, and a beautiful little bedroom entirely to yourself—think of that, sir. You will have an egg for breakfast, and you will dine with the family at three o'clock: quite fashionable hours you see, sir."

"And the terms?" said Linden, impatiently.

"Why, sir," replied Mr. Brown, "the lady was too genteel to talk to me about them—you had better walk with me to her house and see if you cannot yourself agree with her."

"I will," said Clarence. "Will you wait here till I have dressed?"

Mr. Brown bowed his assent.

"I might as well," thought Clarence, as he ascended to his bedroom, "inquire into the character of this gentleman to whose good offices I am so rashly intrusting myself." He rang his bell—the chambermaid appeared, and was dismissed for the waiter. The character was soon asked, and soon given. For our reader's sake we will somewhat enlarge upon it.

Mr. Morris Brown originally came into the world with the simple appellation of Moses, a name which his father—honest man—had, as the Minories can still testify, honourably borne before him. Scarcely, however, had the little Moses attained the age of five, when his father, for causes best known to himself, became a Christian. Somehow or other there is a most potent connection between the purse and the conscience, and accordingly the blessings of Heaven descended in golden showers upon the proselyte. "I shall die worth a plum," said Moses the elder (who had taken unto himself the Christian cognomen of Brown); "I shall die worth a plum," repeated he, as he went one fine morning to speculate at the Exchange. A change of news, sharp and unexpected as a change of wind, lowered the stocks and blighted the plum. Mr. Brown was in the *Gazette* that week, and his wife in weeds for him the next. He left behind him, besides the said wife, several debts and his son Moses. Beggared by the former, our widow took a small shop in Wardour Street to support the latter. Patient, but enterprising—cautious of risking pounds, indefatigable in raising pence—the little Moses inherited the propensities of his Hebrew ancestors; and though not so capable as his immediate progenitor of making a fortune,

he was at least far less likely to lose one. In spite, however, of all the industry, both of mother and son, the gains of the shop were but scanty; to increase them capital was required, and all Mr. Moses Brown's capital lay in his brain. "It is a bad foundation," said the mother, with a sigh. "Not at all!" said the son, and, leaving the shop, he turned broker. Now a broker is a man who makes an income out of other people's funds—a gleaner of stray extravagances; and by doing the public the honour of living upon them, may fairly be termed a little sort of state minister in his way. What with haunting sales, hawking china, selling the curiosities of one old lady, and purchasing the same for another, Mr. Brown managed to enjoy a very comfortable existence. Great pains and small gains will at last invert their anthithesis, and make little trouble and great profit; so that by the time Mr. Brown had attained his fortieth year, the petty shop had become a large warehouse; and if the worthy Moses, now christianised into Morris, was not so sanguine as his father in the gathering of plums, he had been at least as fortunate in the collecting of windfalls. To say truth, the Abigail of the defunct Lady Waddilove had been no unprofitable helpmate to our broker. As ingenious as benevolent, she was the owner of certain rooms of great resort in the neighbourhood of St. James's—rooms where caps and appointments were made better than anywhere else, and where credit was given, and character lost, upon terms equally advantageous to the accommodating Mrs. Brown.

Meanwhile her husband, continuing through liking what he had begun through necessity, slackened not his industry in augmenting his fortune; on the contrary, small profits were but a keener incentive to large ones—as the glutton only sharpened by luncheon his appetite for dinner. Still was Mr. Brown the very Alcibiades of brokers—the universal genius—suiting every man to his humour. Business of whatever description from the purchase of a borough to that of brooch, was alike the object of Mr. Brown's most

zealous pursuit: taverns, where country cousins put up—rustic habitations, where ancient maidens resided—auction, or barter—city, or hamlet—all were the same to that enterprising spirit, which made out of every acquaintance—a commission! Sagacious and acute, Mr. Brown perceived the value of eccentricity in covering design, and found, by experience, that whatever can be laughed at as odd will be gravely considered as harmless. Several of the broker's peculiarities were, therefore, more artificial than natural; and many were the sly bargains which he smuggled into effect under the comfortable cloak of singularity. No wonder then, that the crafty Morris grew gradually in repute as a person of infinite utility and excellent qualifications; or that the penetrating friends of his deceased sire bowed to the thriving itinerant, with a respect which they denied to many in loftier professions and more general esteem.

CHAPTER IX.

Trust me you have an exceeding fine lodging here—very neat and private.—Ben Jonson.

It was a tolerably long walk to the abode of which the worthy broker spoke in such high terms of commendation. At length, at the suburbs towards Paddington, Mr. Brown stopped at a very small house; it stood rather retired from its surrounding neighbours, which were of a loftier and more pretending aspect than itself, and, in its awkward shape and pitiful bashfulness, looked exceedingly like a schoolboy finding himself for the first time in a *grown up* party, and shrinking with all possible expedition into the obscurest corner he can discover. Passing through a sort of garden, in which a spot of grass lay in the embraces of a stripe of gravel, Mr. Brown knocked upon a very bright knocker at a very new door. The lattter was opened, and a footboy appeared.

"Is Mrs. Copperas within?" asked the broker.

"Yees, sir," said the boy.

"Show this gentleman and myself up stairs," resumed Brown.

"Yees," reiterated the lackey.

Up a singularly narrow staircase, into a singularly diminutive drawing-room, Clarence and his guide were ushered. There, seated on a little chair by a little work-table, with one foot on a little stool, and one hand on a little book, was a little—very little lady.

"This is the young gentleman," said Mr. Brown; and Clarence bowed low, in token of the introduction.

The lady returned the salutation with an affected bend, and said, in a mincing and grotesquely subdued tone—"You are desirous, sir, of entering into the bosom of my family. We possess accommodations of a most elegant description;—accustomed to the genteelest circles—enjoying the pure breezes of the Highgate hills—and presenting to any guest we may receive the attractions of a home rather than of a lodging, you will find our retreat no less eligible than unique. You are, I presume, sir, in some profession—some city avocation—or—or trade?"

"I have the misfortune," said he, smiling, "to belong to no profession."

The lady looked hard at the speaker, and then at the broker. With certain people to belong to no profession is to be of no respectability.

"The most unexceptionable references will be given—and *required*," resumed Mrs. Copperas.

"Certainly," said Mr. Brown, "certainly, the gentleman is a relation of Mrs. Minden, a *very* old customer of mine."

"In that case," said Mrs. Copperas, "the affair is settled:" and rising, she rang the bell, and ordered the footboy, whom she addressed by the grandiloquent name of *De Warens*, to show the gentleman the apartments. While Clarence was occupied in surveying the luxuries of a box at the top of the house, called a bedchamber, which seemed

just large and just hot enough for a chrysalis, and a corresponding box below, termed the back parlour, which would certainly *not* have been large enough for the said chrysalis when turned into a butterfly, Mr. Morris Brown, after duly expatiating on the merits of Clarence, proceeded to speak of the terms; these were soon settled, for Clarence was yielding, and the lady not above three times as extortionate as she ought to have been.

Before Linden left the house, the bargain was concluded. That night his trunks were removed to his new abode, and having with incredible difficulty been squeezed into the bedroom, Clarence surveyed them with the same astonishment with which the virtuoso beheld the flies in amber—

> Not that the things were either rich or rare,
> He wondered how the devil they got there!

CHAPTER X.

> Such scenes had tempered with a pensive grace,
> The maiden lustre of that faultless face;
> Had hung a sad and dreamlike spell upon
> The gliding music of her silver tone,
> And shaded the soft soul which loved to lie
> In the deep pathos of that volumed eye.
>
> —*O'Neill; or, The Rebel.*

The love thus kindled between them was of no common or calculating nature; it was vigorous and delicious, and at times so suddenly intense as to appear to their young hearts for a moment or so with almost an awful character.—*Inesilla.*

The reader will figure to himself a small chamber, in a remote wing of a large and noble mansion. The walls were covered with sketches, whose extreme delicacy of outline and colouring betrayed the sex of the artist; a few shelves filled with books supported vases of flowers. A harp stood neglected at the farther end of the room, and

just above hung the slender prison of one of those golden wanderers from the Canary Isles, which bear to our colder land some of the gentlest music of their skies and zephyrs. The window, reaching to the ground, was open, and looked through the clusters of jessamine and honeysuckle which surrounded the low verandah beyond, upon thick and frequent copses of blossoming shrubs, redolent of spring, and sparkling in the sunny tears of a May shower, which had only just wept itself away. Embosomed in these little groves lay plots of flowers, girdled with turf as green as ever wooed the nightly dances of the fairies; and afar off, through one artful opening, the eye caught the glittering wanderings of water, on whose light and smiles the universal happiness of the young year seemed reflected.

But in that chamber, heedless of all around, and cold to the joy with which everything else, equally youthful, beautiful, and innocent, seemed breathing and inspired, sat a very young and lovely female. Her cheek leant upon her hand, and large tears flowed fast and burningly over the small and delicate fingers. The comb that had confined her tresses lay at her feet, and the high dress which concealed her swelling breast had been loosened, to give vent to the suffocating and indignant throbbings which had rebelled against its cincture—all appeared to announce that bitterness of grief when the mind, as it were, wreaks its scorn upon the body in its contempt for external seemings, and to proclaim that the present more subdued and softened sorrow had only succeeded to a burst far less quiet and uncontrolled. Woe to those who eat the bread of dependence—their tears are wrung from the inmost sources of the heart.

Isabel St. Leger was the only child of a captain in the army who died in her infancy; her mother had survived him but a few months; and to the reluctant care and cold affections of a distant and wealthy relation of the same name, the warm-hearted and penniless orphan was con-

signed. Major-General Cornelius St. Leger, whose riches had been purchased in India at the price of his constitution, was of a temper as hot as his curries, and he wreaked it the more unsparingly on his ward, because the superior ill-temper of his maiden sister had prevented his giving vent to it upon her. That sister, Miss Diana St. Leger, was a meagre gentlewoman of about six feet high, with a loud voice and commanding aspect. Long in awe of her brother, she rejoined at heart to find some one whom she had such right and reason to make in awe of herself; and from the age of four to that of seventeen, Isabel suffered every insult and every degradation which could be inflicted upon her by the tyranny of her two protectors. Her spirit, however, was far from being broken by the rude shocks it received; on the contrary, her mind, gentleness itself to the kind, rose indignantly against the unjust. It was true that the sense of wrong did not break forth audibly; for, though susceptible, Isabel was meek, and her pride was concealed by the outward softness and feminacy of her temper; but she stole away from those who had wounded her heart, or trampled upon its feelings, and nourished with secret, but passionate, tears the memory of the harshness or injustice she had endured. Yet she was not vindictive—her resentment was a noble not a debasing feeling; once, when she was yet a child, Miss Diana was attacked with a fever of the most malignant and infectious kind; her brother loved himself far too well to risk his safety by attending her; the servants were too happy to wreak their hatred under the pretence of obeying their fears; they consequently followed the example of their master; and Miss Diana St. Leger might have gone down to her ancestors "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung," if Isabel had not volunteered and enforced her attendance. Hour after hour her fairy form flitted around the sick-chamber, or sat mute and breathless by the feverish bed; she had neither fear for contagion nor bitterness for past oppression; everything vanished beneath the one hope of

serving, the one gratification of feeling herself, in the wide waste of creation, not utterly without use, as she had been hitherto without friends.

Miss St. Leger recovered. "For your recovery, in the first place," said the doctor, "you will thank Heaven; in the second, you will thank your young relation;" and for several days the convalescent did overwhelm the happy Isabel with her praises and caresses. But this change did not last long: the chaste Diana had been too spoiled by the prosperity of many years for the sickness of a single month to effect much good in her disposition. Her old habits were soon resumed; and though it is probable that her *heart* was in reality softened towards the poor Isabel, that softening by no means extended to her temper. In truth, the brother and sister were not without affection for one so beautiful and good, but they had been torturing slaves all their lives, and their affection was, and could be, but that of a taskmaker or a planter.

But Isabel was the only relation who ever appeared within their walls; and among the guests, with whom the luxurious mansion was crowded, she passed no less for the heiress than the dependant; to her, therefore, was offered the homage of many lips and hearts, and if her pride was perpetually galled, and her feelings insulted in private, her vanity (had that equalled her pride and her feelings in its susceptibility) would in no slight measure have recompensed her in public. Unhappily, however, her vanity was the least prominent quality she possessed; and the compliments of mercenary adulation were not more rejected by her heart than despised by her understanding.

Yet did she bear within her a deep fund of buried tenderness, and a mine of girlish and enthusiastic romance;—dangerous gifts to one so situated, which, while they gave to her secret moments of solitude a powerful, but vague attraction, probably only prepared for her future years the snare which might betray them into error, or the delusion which would colour them with regret.

Among those whom the ostentatious hospitality of General St. Leger attracted to his house was one of very different character and pretensions to the rest. Formed to be unpopular with the generality of men, the very qualities that made him so were those which principally fascinate the higher description of women of ancient birth, which rendered still more displeasing the pride and coldness of his mien; of talents peculiarly framed to attract interest as well as esteem; of a deep and somewhat morbid melancholy, which, while it turned from ordinary ties, inclined yearningly towards passionate affections; of a temper where romance was only concealed from the many to become more seductive to the few; unsocial, but benevolent; disliked but respected; of the austerest demeanour, but of passions the most fervid, though the most carefully concealed;—this man united within himself all that repels the common mass of his species, and all that irresistibly wins and fascinates the rare and romantic few. To these qualities were added a carriage and bearing of that high and commanding order which men mistake for arrogance and pretension, and women overrate in proportion to its contrast to their own. Something of mystery there was in the commencement of the deep and eventful love which took place between this person and Isabel, which I have never been able to learn: whatever it was, it seemed to expedite and heighten the ordinary progress of love; and when in the dim twilight, beneath the first melancholy smile of the earliest star, their hearts opened audibly to each other, that confession had been made silently long since, and registered in the inmost recesses of the soul.

But their passion, which began in prosperity, was soon darkened. Whether he took offence at the haughtiness of Isabel's lover, or whether he desired to retain about him an object which he could torment and tyrannise over, no sooner did the General discover the attachment of his young relation than he peremptorily forbade its indulgence, and assumed so insolent and overbearing an air towards

the lover, that the latter felt he could no longer repeat his visits to, or even continue his acquaintance with, the nabob.

To add to these adverse circumstances, a relation of the lover, from whom his expectations had been large, was so enraged, not only at the insult his cousin had received, but at the very idea of his forming an alliance with one in so dependent a situation, and connnected with such new blood, as Isabel St. Leger, that, with that arrogance which relations, however distant, think themselves authorised to assume, he enjoined his cousin, upon pain of forfeiture of favour and fortune, to renounce all idea of so disparaging an alliance. The one thus addressed was not of a temper patiently to submit to such threats; he answered them with disdain, and the breach, so dangerous to his pecuniary interest, was already begun.

So far had the history of our lover proceeded at the time in which we have introduced Isabel to the reader, and described to him the chamber to which, in all her troubles and humiliations, she was accustomed to fly, as to a sad, but still unviolated, sanctuary of retreat.

The quiet of this asylum was first broken by a slight rustling among the leaves; but Isabel's back was turned towards the window, and in the engrossment of her feelings she heard it not. The thick copse that darkened the left side of the veranda was pierced, and a man passed within the covered space, and stood still and silent before the window, intently gazing upon the figure which (though the face was turned from him) betrayed in its proportions that beauty which, in his eyes, had neither an equal nor a fault.

The figure of the stranger, though not very tall, was above the ordinary height, and gracefully, rather than robustly, formed. He was dressed in the darkest colours and the simplest fashion, which rendered yet more striking the nobleness of his mien, as well as the clear and almost delicate paleness of his complexion; his features were finely and accurately formed; and had not ill health. long

travel, or severe thought deepened too much the lines of the countenance, and sharpened its contour, the classic perfection of those features would have rendered him undeniably and even eminently handsome. As it was, the paleness and the somewhat worn character of his face, joined to an expression at first glance rather haughty and repellent, made him lose in physical what he certainly gained in intellectual beauty. His eyes were large, deep, and melancholy, and had the hat which now hung over his brow been removed, it would have displayed a forehead of remarkable boldness and power.

Altogether, the face was cast in a rare and intellectual mould, and, if wanting in those more luxuriant attractions common to the age of the stranger, who could scarcely have attained his twenty-sixth year, it betokened, at least, that predominance of mind over body which in some eyes is the most requisite characteristic of masculine beauty.

With a soft and noiseless step, the stranger moved from his station without the window, and, entering the room, stole towards the spot on which Isabel was sitting. He leant over her chair, and his eye rested upon his own picture, and a letter in his own writing, over which the tears of the young orphan flowed fast.

A moment more of agitated happiness for one—of unconscious and continued sadness for the other—

'Tis past—her lover's at her feet.

And what indeed "was to them the world beside, with all its changes of time and tide"? Joy—hope—all blissful and bright sensations, lay mingled like meeting waters, in one sunny stream of heartfelt and unfathomable enjoyment—but this passed away, and the remembrance of bitterness and evil succeeded.

"Oh, Algernon!" said Isabel, in a low voice, "is this your promise?"

"Believe me," said Mordaunt, for it was indeed he, "I have struggled long with my feelings, but in vain; and for

both our sakes, I rejoice at the conquest they obtained. I listened only to a deceitful delusion when I imagined I was obeying the dictates of reason. Ah, dearest, why should we part for the sake of dubious and distant evils, when the misery of absence is the most certain, the most unceasing evil we can endure?"

"For your sake, and therefore for mine!" interrupted Isabel, struggling with her tears. "I am a beggar and an outcast. You must not link your fate with mine. I could bear, Heaven knows how willingly, poverty and all its evils *for* you and *with* you; but I cannot *bring* them upon you."

"Nor will you," said Mordaunt, passionately, as he covered the hand he held with his burning kisses. "Have I not enough for both of us? It is my love, not poverty, that I beseech you to share."

"No! Algernon, you cannot deceive me; your own estate will be torn from you by the law: if you marry me, your cousin will not assist you: I, you know too well, can command nothing; and I shall see you, for whom in my fond and bright dreams I have presaged everything great and exalted, buried in an obscurity from which your talents can never rise, and suffering the pangs of poverty, and dependence, and humiliation like my own—and—and—I—should be the wretch who caused you all. Never, Algernon, never!—I love you too—too well!"

But the effort which wrung forth the determination of the tone in which these words were uttered was too violent to endure; and, as the full desolation of her despair crowded fast and dark upon the orphan's mind, she sank back upon her chair in very sickness of soul, nor heeded, in her unconscious misery, that her hand was yet clasped by her lover, and that her head drooped upon his bosom.

"Isabel," he said, in a low, sweet tone, which to her ear seemed the concentration of all earthly music—"Isabel—look up—my own—my beloved—look up and hear me. Perhaps you say truly when you tell me that the posses-

sions of my house shall melt away from me, and that my relation will not offer to me the precarious bounty which, even if he did offer, I would reject; but, dearest, are there not a thousand paths open to me—the law—the state—the army?—you are silent, Isabel—speak!"

Isabel did not reply, but the soft eyes which rested upon his told, in their despondency, how little her reason was satisfied by the arguments he urged.

"Besides," he continued, "we know not yet whether the law may not decide in my favour—at all events years may pass before the judgment is given—those years make the prime and verdure of our lives—let us not waste them in mourning over blighted hopes and severed hearts—let us snatch what happiness is yet in our power, nor anticipate, while the heavens are still bright above us, the burden of the thunder or the cloud."

Isabel was one of the least selfish and most devoted of human beings, yet she must be forgiven, if at that moment her resolution faltered, and the overpowering thought of being in reality *his* for ever flashed upon her mind. It passed from her the moment it was formed, and rising from a situation in which the touch of that dear hand, and the breath of those wooing lips endangered the virtue, and weakened the strength, of her resolves, she withdrew herself from his grasp, and while she averted her eyes, which dared not encounter his, she said in a low but firm voice—

"It is in vain, Algernon; it is in vain. I can be to you nothing but a blight or burthen, nothing but a source of privation and anguish. Think you that I *will* be this?—no, I will not darken your fair hopes and impede your reasonable ambition. Go (and here her voice faltered for a moment, but soon recovered its tone), go, Algernon, *dear* Algernon; and if my foolish heart will not ask you to think of me no more, I can at least implore you to think of me only as one who would die rather than cost you a moment of that poverty and debasement, the bitterness of which

she has felt herself, and who for that very reason tears herself away from you for ever.

"Stay, Isabel, stay!" cried Mordaunt, as he caught hold of her robe, "give me but one word more, and you shall leave me. Say that if I can create for myself a new source of independence; if I can carve out a road where the ambition you erroneously impute to me can be gratified, as well as the more moderate wishes our station has made natural to us to form—say, that if I do this, I may permit myself to hope—say, that *when* I have done it, I may claim you as my own!"

Isabel paused, and turned once more her face towards his own. Her lips moved, and though the words died within her heart, yet Mordaunt read well their import in the blushing cheek and the heaving bosom, and the lips which one ray of hope and comfort was sufficient to kindle into smiles. He gazed, and all obstacles, all difficulties, disappeared; the gulf of time seemed passed, and he felt as if already he had earned and won his reward.

He approached her yet nearer; one kiss on those lips, one pressure of that thrilling hand, one long, last embrace of that shrinking and trembling form—and then, as the door closed upon his view, he felt that the sunshine of nature had passed away, and that in the midst of the laughing and peopled earth *he* stood in darkness and alone.

CHAPTER XI.

He who would know mankind must be at home with all men.
STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

WE left Clarence safely deposited in his little lodgings. Whether from the heat of his apartment or the restlessness a migration of beds produces in certain constitutions, his slumbers on the first night of his arrival were disturbed

and brief. He rose early and descended to the parlour; Mr. de Warens, the nobly appellatived foot-boy, was laying the breakfast cloth. From three painted shelves which constitute the library of "Copperas Bower," as its owners gracefully called their habitation, Clarence took down a book very prettily bound; it was *Poems by a Nobleman.* No sooner had he read two pages than he did exactly what the reader would have done, and restored the volume respectfully to its place. He then drew his chair towards the window, and wistfully eyed sundry ancient nursery-maids, who were leading their infant charges to the "fresh fields and pastures new" of what is now the Regent's Park.

In about an hour Mrs. Copperas descended, and mutual compliments were exchanged; to her succeeded Mr. Copperas, who was well scolded for his laziness: and to them, Master Adolphus Copperas, who was also chidingly termed a naughty darling, for the same offence. Now then Mrs. Copperas prepared the tea, which she did in the approved method, adopted by all ladies to whom economy is dearer than renown—viz. the least possible quantity of the *soi-disant* Chinese plant was first sprinkled by the least possible quantity of hot water; after this mixture had become as black and as bitter as it could possibily be without any adjunct from the apothecary's skill, it was suddenly drenched with a copious diffusion, and as suddenly poured forth weak, washy, and abominable, into four cups, severally appertaining unto the four partakers of the matutinal nectar.

Then the conversation began to flow. Mrs. Copperas was a fine lady, and a sentimentalist—very observant of the little niceties of phrase and manner. Mr. Copperas was a stock-jobber and a wit, loved a good hit in each capacity, was very round, very short, and very much like a John Dory, and saw in the features and mind of the little Copperas the exact representative of himself.

"Adolphus, my love," said Mrs. Copperas, "mind what

I told you, and sit upright. Mr. Linden, will you allow me to cut you a *leetle* piece of this roll?"

"Thank you," said Clarence, "I will trouble you rather for the whole of it."

Conceive Mrs. Copperas's dismay! From that moment she saw herself eaten out of house and home; besides, as she afterwards observed to her friend Miss Barbara York, the "vulgarity of such an amazing appetite!"

"Any commands in the city, Mr. Linden?" asked the husband; "a coach will pass by our door in a few minutes—must be on 'Change in half an hour. Come, my love, another cup of tea—make haste—I have scarcely a moment to take *my fare* for the inside, before coaches takes *his* for the outside. Ha! ha! ha! Mr. Linden."

"Lord, Mr. Copperas," said his helpmate, "how can you be so silly? setting such an example to your son, too—never mind him, Adolphus, my love—fie, child! a'n't you ashamed of yourself?—never put the spoon in your cup till you have done tea: I must really send you to school to learn manners. We have a very pretty little collection of books here, Mr. Linden, if you would like to read an hour or two after breakfast—child, take your hands out of your pockets—all the best English classics I believe—*Telemachus*, and Young's *Night Thoughts*, and *Joseph Andrews*, and the *Spectator*, and Pope's *Iliad*, and Creech's *Lucretius;* but you will look over them yourself! This is Liberty Hall, as well as Copperas Bower, Mr. Linden!"

"Well, my love," said the stock-jobber, "I believe I must be off. Here Tom—Tom—(Mr. de Warens had just entered the room with some more hot water, to weaken still farther "the poor remains of what was once"—the tea!)—Tom, just run out and stop the coach, it will be by in five minutes."

"Have not I prayed and besought you, many and many a time, Mr. Copperas," said the lady, rebukingly, "not to call De Warens by his Christian name? Don't you know, that all people in genteel life, who only keep one servant,

invariably call him by his surname, as if he were the butler, you know?"

"Now, that is too good, my love," said Copperas. "I will call poor Tom by any surname you please, but I really can't pass him off for a butler! Ha—ha—ha—you must excuse me there, my love!"

"And pray, why not, Mr. Copperas? I have known many a butler bungle more at a cork than he does; and pray tell me who did you ever see wait better at dinner?"

"He wait at dinner, my love! it is not he who waits."

"Who then, Mr. Copperas?"

"Why *we*, my love—it's we who wait for dinner—but that's the cook's fault, not his."

"Pshaw! Mr. Copperas—Adolphus, my love, sit upright, darling."

Here de Warens cried from the bottom of the stairs—

"Measter, the coach be coming up."

"There won't be room for it to turn then," said the facetious Mr. Copperas, looking round the apartment, as if he took the words literally.

"What coach is it, boy?"

Now that was not the age in which coaches scoured the city every half hour, and Mr. Copperas knew the name of the coach as well as he knew his own.

"It be the Swallow coach, sir."

"Oh, very well: then since I have swallowed in the roll, I will now roll in the Swallow—ha—ha—ha! Good-bye, Mr. Linden."

No sooner had the witty stock-jobber left the room than Mrs. Copperas seemed to expand into a new existence. "My husband, sir," said she apologetically, "is *so* odd, but he's an excellent sterling character; and that, you know, Mr. Linden, tells more in the bosom of a family than all the shining qualities which captivate the imagination. I am sure, Mr. Linden, that the moralist is right in admonishing us to prefer the gold to the tinsel. I have now been married some years, and every year seems happier than

the last; but then, Mr. Linden, it is such a pleasure to contemplate the growing graces of the sweet pledge of our mutual love—Adolphus, my dear, keep your feet still, and take your hands out of your pockets!"

A short pause ensued.

"We see a great deal of company," said Mrs. Copperas, pompously, "and of the very best description. Sometimes we are favoured by the society of the great Mr. Talbot, a gentleman of immense fortune, and quite the courtier: he is, it is true, a little eccentric in his dress; but then he was a celebrated beau in his younger days. He is our next neighbour; you can see his house out of the window, just across the garden—there! We have also, sometimes, our humble board graced by a very elegant friend of mine, Miss Barbara York, a lady of very high connections, her first cousin was a lord mayor—Adolphus, my dear, what are you about? Well, Mr. Linden, you will find your retreat quite undisturbed; I must go about the household affairs; not that I do anything more than superintend, you know, sir; but I think no lady should be above consulting her husband's interests—that's what I call true old English conjugal affection. Come, Adolphus, my dear."

And Clarence was now alone. "I fear," thought he, "that I shall get on very indifferently with these people. But it will not do for me to be misanthropical (and, as Dr. Latinas was wont to say), the great merit of philosophy, when we cannot *command* circumstances, is to *reconcile* us to them."

CHAPTER XII.

A retired beau is one of the most instructive spectacles in the world. STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

IT was quite true that Mrs. Copperas saw a great deal of company, for at a certain charge, upon certain days, any individual might have the honour of sharing her family

repast; and many, of various callings, though chiefly in commercial life, met at her miscellaneous board. Clarence must, indeed, have been difficult to please, or obtuse of observation, if, in the variety of her guests, he had not found something either to interest or amuse him. Heavens! what a motley group were accustomed, twice in the week, to assemble there! the little dining parlour seemed a human oven; and it must be owned that Clarence was no slight magnet of attraction to the female part of the guests. Mrs. Copperas's bosom friend in especial, the accomplished Miss Barbara York, darted the most tender glances on the handsome young stranger; but whether or not a nose remarkably prominent and long prevented the glances from taking full effect, it is certain that Clarence seldom repaid them with that affectionate ardour which Miss Barbara York had ventured to anticipate. The only persons indeed for whom he felt any sympathetic attraction were of the same sex as himself. The one was Mr. Talbot, the old gentleman whom Mrs. Copperas had described as the perfect courtier; the other, a young artist of the name of Warner. Talbot, to Clarence's great astonishment (for Mrs. Copperas's eulogy had prepared him for something eminently displeasing), was a man of birth, fortune, and manners peculiarly graceful and attractive. It is true, however, that, despite of his vicinity, and Mrs. Copperas's urgent solicitations, he very seldom honoured her with his company, and he always cautiously sent over his servant in the morning to inquire the names and number of her expected guests: nor was he ever known to share the plenteous board of the stock-jobber's lady whenever any other partaker of its dainties, save Clarence and the young artist, were present. The latter, the old gentleman really liked: and as for one truly well born and well bred there is no vulgarity except in the mind, the slender means, obscure birth, and struggling profession of Warner, were circumstances which, as they increased the merit of a gentle manner and a fine mind, spoke rather in his favour

than the reverse. Mr. Talbot was greatly struck by Clarence Linden's conversation and appearance; and indeed there was in Talbot's tastes so strong a bias to aristocratic externals, that Clarence's air alone would have been sufficient to win the good graces of a man who had, perhaps, more than most courtiers of his time, cultivated the arts of manner and the secrets of address.

"You will call upon me soon?" said he to Clarence, who, after dining one day with the Copperases and their inmate, he rose to return home. And Clarence, delighted with the urbanity and liveliness of his new acquaintance, readily promised that he would.

Accordingly the next day, Clarence called upon Mr. Talbot. The house, as Mrs. Copperas had before said, adjoined her own, and was only separated from it by a garden. It was a dull mansion of brick, which had disdained the frippery of paint and whitewashing, and had indeed been built many years previously to the erection of the modern habitations which surrounded it. It was, therefore, as a consequence of this priority of birth, more sombre than the rest, and had a peculiarly forlorn and solitary look. As Clarence approached the door, he was struck with the size of the house—it was of very considerable extent, and in the more favourable situations of London, would have passed for a very desirable and spacious tenement. An old man, whose accurate precision of dress bespoke the tastes of the master, opened the door, and after ushering Clarence through two long, and, to his surprise, almost splendidly furnished rooms, led him into a third, where, seated at a small writing-table, he found Mr. Talbot. That person, one whom Clarence then little thought would hereafter exercise no small influence over his fate, was of a figure and countenance well worthy the notice of a description.

His own hair, quite white, was carefully and artificially curled, and gave a Grecian cast to features whose original delicacy, and exact though small proportions, not even age

could destroy. His eyes were large, black, and sparkled with almost youthfull vivacity, and his mouth, which was the best feature he possessed, developed teeth, white and even as rows of ivory. Though small, and somewhat too slender in the proportions of his figure, nothing could exceed the ease and the grace of his motions and air; and his dress, though singularly rich in its materials, eccentric in its fashion, and from its evident study, unseemly to his years, served nevertheless to render rather venerable than ridiculous a mien which could almost have carried off any absurdity, and which the fashion of the garb peculiarly became. The *tout ensemble* was certainly that of a man who was still vain of his exterior, and conscious of its effect; and it was as certainly impossible to converse with Mr. Talbot for five minutes, without merging every less respectful impression in the magical fascination of his manner.

"I thank you, Mr. Linden," said Talbot, rising, "for your accepting so readily an old man's invitation. If I have felt pleasure in discovering that we were to be neighbours, you may judge what that pleasure is to-day at finding you my visitor."

Clarence, who, to do him justice, was always ready at returning a fine speech, replied in a similar strain, and the conversation flowed on agreeably enough. There was more than a moderate collection of books in the room, and this circumstance led Clarence to allude to literary subjects; these Mr. Talbot took up with avidity, and touched with a light but graceful criticism upon many of the then modern, and some of the older, writers. He seemed delighted to find himself understood and appreciated by Clarence, and every moment of Linden's visit served to ripen their acquaintance into intimacy. At length they talked upon Copperas Bower and its inmates.

"You will find your host and hostess," said the gentleman, "certainly of a different order from the persons with whom it is easy to see you have associated; but, at your

happy age, a year or two may be very well thrown away upon observing the manners and customs of those whom, in later life, you may often be called upon to conciliate, or perhaps to control. That man will never be a perfect gentleman who lives only with gentlemen. To be a man of the world, we must view that world in every grade, and in every perspective. In short, the most practical art of wisdom is that which extracts from things the very quality they least appear to possess; and the actor in the world, like the actor on the stage, should 'find a basket-hilted sword very convenient to carry milk in.'[1] As for me, I have survived my relations and friends. I cannot keep late hours, nor adhere to the unhealthy customs of good society; nor do I think that, to a man of my age and habits, any remuneration would adequately repay the sacrifice of health or comfort. I am, therefore, well content to sink into a hermitage in an obscure corner of this great town, and only occasionally to revive my 'past remembrances of higher state,' by admitting a few old acquaintances to drink my bachelor's tea, and talk over the news of the day. Hence, you see, Mr. Linden, I pick up two or three novel anecdotes of state and scandal, and maintain my importance at Copperas Bower by retailing them second-hand. Now that you are one of the inmates of that abode I shall be more frequently its guest. By the by, I will let you into a secret: know that I am somewhat a lover of the marvellous, and like to indulge a little embellishing exaggeration in any place where there is no chance of finding me out. Mind, therefore, my dear Mr. Linden, that you take no ungenerous advantage of this confession; but suffer me, now and then, to tell my stories my own way, even when you think truth would require me to tell them in another."

"Certainly," said Clarence, laughing; "let us make an agreement: you shall tell your stories as you please, if you will grant me the same liberty in paying my compliments;

[1] See the witty inventory of a player's goods in the *Tatler*.

and if I laugh aloud at the stories, you shall promise me not to laugh aloud at the compliments."

"It is a bond," said Talbot; "and a very fit exchange of service it is. It will be a problem in human nature to see who has the best of it: you shall pay your court by flattering the people present, and I mine, by abusing those absent. Now, in spite of your youth and curling locks, I will wager that I succeed the best; for in vanity there is so great a mixture of envy that no compliment is like a judicious abuse—to enchant your acquaintance, ridicule his friends."

"Ah, sir," said Clarence, "this opinion of yours is, I trust, a little in the French school, where brilliancy is more studied than truth, and where an ill opinion of our species always has the merit of passing for profound."

Talbot smiled, and shook his head. "My dear young friend," said he, "it is quite right that you, who are coming into the world, should think well of it; and it is also quite right that I, who am going out of it, should console myself by trying to despise it. However, let me tell you, my young friend, that he whose opinion of mankind is not too elevated will always be the most benevolent, because the most indulgent, to those errors incidental to human imperfection: to place our nature in too flattering a view is only to court disappointment, and end in misanthrophy. The man who sets out with expecting to find all his fellow-creatures heroes of virtue, will conclude by condemning them as monsters of vice; and, on the contrary, the least exacting judge of actions will be the most lenient. If God, in His own perfection, did not see so many frailties in us, think you He would be so gracious to our virtues?"

"And yet," said Clarence, "we remark every day examples of the highest excellence."

"Yes," replied Talbot, "of the *highest*, but not of the most *constant*, excellence. He knows very little of the human heart who imagines we cannot do a good action; but, alas! he knows still less of it who supposes we can be always doing good actions. In exactly the same ratio we

see every day the greatest crimes are committed; but we find no wretch so depraved as to be always committing crimes. Man cannot be perfect even in guilt."

In this manner Talbot and his young visitor conversed till Clarence, after a stay of unwarrantable length, rose to depart.

"Well," said Talbot, "if we now rightly understand each other, we shall be the best friends in the world. As we shall expect great things from each other sometimes, we will have no scruple in exacting a heroic sacrifice every now and then; for instance—I will ask you to punish yourself by an occasional *tête-à-tête* with an ancient gentleman; and, as we can also, by the same reasoning, pardon great faults in each other, if they are not often committed, so I will forgive you, with all my heart, whenever you refuse my invitations, if you do not refuse them often. And now farewell till we meet again."

It seemed singular, and almost unnatural to Linden, that a man like Talbot, of birth, fortune, and great fastidiousness of taste and temper, should have formed any sort of acquaintance, however slight and distant, with the facetious stock-jobber and his wife; but the fact is easily explained by a reference to the vanity which we shall see hereafter made the ruling passion of Talbot's nature. This vanity, which branching forth into a thousand eccentricities, displayed itself in the singularity of his dress, the studied yet graceful warmth of his manner, his attention to the minutiæ of life, his desire, craving and insatiate, to receive from every one, however insignificant, his *obolum* of admiration; —this vanity, once flattered by the obsequious homage it obtained from the wonder and reverence of the Copperases, reconciled his taste to the disgust it so frequently and necessarily conceived; and, having in great measure resigned his former acquaintance, and wholly outlived his friends, he was contented to purchase the applause which had become to him a necessary of life at the humble market more immediately at his command.

There is no dilemma in which Vanity cannot find an expedient to develop its form—no stream of circumstances in which its buoyant and light nature will not rise to float upon the surface. And its ingenuity is as fertile as that of the player who (his wardrobe allowing him no other method of playing the fop) could still exhibit the prevalent passion for distinction by wearing stockings of different colours.

CHAPTER XIII.

Who dares
Interpret then my life for me as 'twere
One of the undistinguishable many?
COLERIDGE'S *Wallenstein.*

THE first time Clarence had observed the young artist he had taken a deep interest in his appearance. Pale, thin, undersized, and slightly deformed, the sanctifying mind still shed over the humble frame a spell more powerful than beauty. Absent in manner, melancholy in air, and never conversing except upon subjects on which his imagination was excited, there was yet a gentleness about him which could not fail to conciliate and prepossess; nor did Clarence omit any opportunity to soften his reserve, and wind himself into his more intimate acquaintance. Warner, the only support of an aged and infirm grandmother (who had survived her immediate children), was distantly related to Mrs. Copperas; and that lady extended to him, with ostentatious benevolence, her favour and support. It is true, that she did not impoverish the young Adolphus to enrich her kinsman, but she allowed him a seat at her hospitable board, whenever it was not otherwise filled; and all that she demanded in return was a picture of herself, another of Mr. Copperas, a third of Master Adolphus, a fourth of the black cat, and from time to time sundry other lesser productions of his genius, of which, through the agency of Mr.

Brown, she secretly disposed at a price that sufficiently remunerated her for whatever havoc the slender appetite of the young painter was able to effect.

By this arrangement, Clarence had many opportunities of gaining that intimacy with Warner which had become to him an object; and though the painter, constitutionally diffident and shy, was at first averse to, and even awed by, the ease, boldness, fluent speech, and confident address of a man much younger than himself, yet at last he could not resist the being decoyed into familiarity; and the youthful pair gradually advanced from companionship into friendship. There was a striking contrast between the two; Clarence was bold and frank, Warner close and timid. Both had superior abilities—but the abilities of Clarence were for action, those of Warner for art: both were ambitious, but the ambition of Clarence was that of circumstances rather than character. Compelled to carve his own fortunes without sympathy or aid, he braced his mind to the effort, though naturally too gay for the austerity, and too genial for the selfishness of ambition. But the very essence of Warner's nature was the feverish desire of fame; it poured through his veins like lava; it preyed as a worm upon his cheek; it corroded his natural sleep; it blackened the colour of his thoughts; it shut out, as with an impenetrable wall, the wholesome energies and enjoyments and objects of living men; and, taking from him all the vividness of the present, all the tenderness of the past, constrained his heart to dwell for ever and for ever amidst the dim and shadowy chimeras of a future he was fated never to enjoy.

But these differences of character, so far from disturbing, rather cemented their friendship; and while Warner (notwithstanding his advantage of age) paid involuntary deference to the stronger character of Clarence, he, in his turn, derived that species of pleasure by which he was most gratified, from the affectionate and unenvious interest Clarence took in his speculations of future distinction, and the

unwearying admiration with which he would sit by his side, and watch the colours start from the canvas, beneath the real, though uncultured, genius of the youthful painter.

Hitherto, Warner had bounded his attempts to some of the lesser efforts of the art; he had now yielded to the urgent enthusiasm of his nature, and conceived the plan of an historical picture. Oh! what sleepless nights, what struggles of the teeming fancy with the dense brain, what labours of the untiring thought wearing and intense as disease itself, did it cost the ambitious artist to work out in the stillness of his soul, and from its confused and conflicting images, the design of this long meditated and idolised performance! But when it *was* designed; when shape upon shape grew and swelled, and glowed from the darkness of previous thought upon the painter's mind; when, shutting his eyes in the very credulity of delight, the whole work arose before him, glossy with its fresh hues, bright, completed, faultless, arrayed as it were, and decked out for immortality—oh! then what a full and gushing moment of rapture broke like a released stream upon his soul! What a recompense for wasted years, health, and hope! What a coronal to the visions and transports of Genius: brief, it is true, but how steeped in the very halo of a light that might well be deemed the glory of heaven!

But the vision fades, the gorgeous shapes sweep on into darkness, and, waking from his reverie, the artist sees before him only the dull walls of his narrow chamber; the canvas stretched a blank upon its frame; the works, maimed, crude, unfinished, of an inexperienced hand, lying idly around; and feels himself—*himself*, but one moment before the creator of a world of wonders, the master spirit of shapes glorious and majestical beyond the shapes of men—dashed down from his momentary height, and despoiled both of his sorcery and his throne.

It was just in such a moment that Warner, starting up, saw Linden (who had silently entered his room) standing motionless before him.

"Oh! Linden," said the artist, "I have had so superb a dream—a dream which, though I have before snatched some such vision by fits and glimpses, I never beheld so realised, so perfect as now; and—but you shall see, you shall judge for yourself; I will sketch out the design for you;" and with a piece of chalk, and a rapid hand, Warner conveyed to Linden the outline of his conception. His young friend was eager in his praise and his predictions of renown, and Warner listened to him with a fondness which spread over his pale cheek a richer flush than lover ever caught from the whispers of his beloved.

"Yes," said he, as he rose, and his sunken and small eye flashed out with a feverish brightness, "yes, if my hand does not fail my thought, it shall rival even—" Here the young painter stopped short, abashed at that indiscretion of enthusiasm about to utter to another the hoarded vanities hitherto locked in his heart of hearts as a sealed secret, almost from himself.

"But come," said Clarence, affectionately, "your hand is feverish and dry, and of late you have seemed more languid than you were wont—come, Warner, you want exercise: it is a beautiful evening, and you shall explain your picture still farther to me as we walk."

Accustomed to yield to Clarence, Warner mechanically and abstractedly obeyed; they walked out into the open streets.

"Look around us," said Warner, pausing, "look among this toiling, and busy, and sordid mass of beings who claim with us the fellowship of clay. The poor labour, the rich feast; the only distinction between them is that of the insect and the brute; like them they fulfil the same end, and share the same oblivion; they die, a new race springs up, and the very grass upon their graves fades not so soon as their memory. Who that is conscious of a higher nature would not pine and fret himself away to be confounded with these? Who would not burn, and sicken, and parch, with a delirious longing to divorce himself from so vile a

herd? What have their petty pleasures, and their mean aims to atone for the abasement of grinding down our spirits to their level? Is not the distinction from their blended and common name a sufficient recompense for all that ambition suffers or foregoes? Oh, for one brief hour (I ask no more) of living honour, one feeling of conscious, unfearing certainty, that Fame has conquered Death! and then for this humble and impotent clay, this drag on the spirit which it does not assist but fetter, this wretched machine of pains and aches, and feverish throbbings, and vexed inquietudes, why, let the worms consume it, and the grave hide—for Fame there is *no* grave."

At that moment one of those unfortunate women, who earn their polluted sustenance by becoming the hypocrites of passions, abruptly accosted them.

"Miserable wretch!" said Warner, loathingly, as he pushed her aside; but Clarence, with a kindlier feeling, noticed that her haggard cheek was wet with tears, and that her frame, weak and trembling, could scarcely support itself; he, therefore, with that promptitude of charity which gives ere it discriminates, put some pecuniary assistance in her hand, and joined his comrade.

"You would not have spoken so tauntingly to the poor girl had you remarked her distress," said Clarence.

"And why," said Warner, mournfully, "why be so cruel as to prolong, even for a few hours, an existence which mercy would only seek to bring nearer to the tomb? That unfortunate is but one of the herd, one of the victims to pleasures which debase by their progress, and ruin by their end. Yet perhaps she is not worse than the usual followers of love—of love—that passion the most worshipped, yet the least divine,—selfish and exacting—drawing its aliment from destruction, and its very nature from tears."

"Nay," said Clarence, "you confound the two loves, the Eros and the Anteros; gods whom my good tutor was wont so sedulously to distinguish: you surely do not inveigh thus against *all* love?"

"I cry you mercy," said Warner, with something of sarcasm in his pensiveness of tone. "We must not dispute, so I will hold my peace; but make love all you will, what are the false smiles of a lip which a few years can blight as an autumn leaf? what the homage of a heart as feeble and mortal as your own? Why, I with a few strokes of a little hair, and an idle mixture of worthless colours, will create a beauty in whose mouth there shall be no hollowness—in whose lip there shall be no fading—there, in your admiration you shall have no need of flattery, and no fear of falsehood; you shall not be stung with jealousy, nor maddened with treachery; nor watch with a breaking heart over the waning bloom, and departing health, till the grave open, and your perishable paradise is *not*. No—the mimic work is mightier than the original, for it outlasts it; your love cannot wither it, or your desertion destroy—your very death, as the being who called it into life, only stamps it with a holier value."

"And so then," said Clarence, "you would seriously relinquish, for the mute copy of the mere features, those affections which no painting can express?"

"Ay," said the painter, with an energy unusual to his quiet manner, and lightly wandering in his answer from Clarence's remark, "ay, one serves not two mistresses—mine is the glory of my art. Oh! what are the cold shapes of this tame earth, where the footsteps of the gods have vanished, and left no trace, the blemished forms, the debased brows, and the jarring features, to the glorious and gorgeous images which I can conjure up at my will? Away with human beauties, to him whose nights are haunted with the forms of angels and wanderers from the stars, the spirits of all things lovely and exalted in the universe:—the universe as it *was*—when to fountain, and stream, and hill, and to every tree which the summer clothed, was allotted the vigil of a Nymph!—when through glade, and by waterfall, at glossy noontide, or under the silver stars, the forms of Godhead and Spirit were seen to walk; when the

sculptor modelled his mighty work from the beauty and strength of Heaven, and the poet lay in the shade to dream of the Naiad and the Faun, and the Olympian dwellers whom he waked in rapture to behold; and the painter, not as now, shaping from shadow and in solitude the dim glories of his heart, caught at once his inspiration from the glow of earth and its living wanderers, and, lo, the canvas breathed! Oh! what are the dull realities and the abortive offspring of this altered and humbled world—the world of meaner and dwarfish men—to him whose realms are peopled with visions like these?"

And the artist, whose ardour, long excited, and pent within, had at last thus audibly, and to Clarence's astonishment, burst forth, paused, as if to recall himself from his wandering enthusiasm. Such moments of excitement were, indeed, rare with him, except when utterly alone, and even then, were almost invariably followed by that depression of spirit by which all over-wrought susceptibility is succeeded. A change came over his face, like that of a cloud, when the sunbeam, which gilded, leaves it, and with a slight sigh, and a subdued tone, he resumed:

"So, my friend, you see what our art can do even for the humblest professor, when I, a poor, friendless, patronless artist, can thus indulge myself by forgetting the present. But I have not yet explained to you the attitude of my principal figure;" and Warner proceeded once more to detail the particulars of his intended picture. It must be confessed that he has chosen a fine, though an arduous subject: it was the Trial of Charles the First; and as the painter, with the enthusiasm of his profession and the eloquence peculiar to himself, dwelt upon the various expressions of the various forms which that extraordinary judgment court afforded, no wonder that Clarence forgot, with the artist himself, the disadvantages Warner had to encounter, in the inexperience of an unregulated taste, and an imperfect professional education.

CHAPTER XIV.

All manners take a tincture from our own,
Or come discoloured through our passions shown.—POPE.

What! give up liberty, property, and, as the Gazetteer says, lie down to be saddled with wooden shoes?—*Vicar of Wakefield.*

THERE was something in the melancholy and reflective character of Warner resembling that of Mordaunt; had they lived in these days perhaps both the artist and the philosopher had been poets. But (with regard to the latter) at that time poetry was not the customary vent for deep thought or passionate feeling. Gray, it is true, though unjustly condemned as artificial and meretricious in his style, had infused into the scanty works which he has bequeathed to immortality a pathos and a richness foreign to the literature of the age; and, subsequently, Goldsmith, in the affecting, yet somewhat enervate simplicity of his verse, had obtained for Poetry a brief respite from a school at once declamatory and powerless, and led her forth for a "Sunshine Holiday," into the village green and under the hawthorn shade. But, though the softer and meeker feelings had struggled into a partial and occasional vent, those which partook more of passion and of thought, the deep, the wild, the fervid were still without "the music of a voice." For the after century it was reserved to restore what we may be permitted to call the spirit of our national literature; to forsake the *clinquant* of the French mimickers of classic gold; to exchange a thrice-adulterated Hippocrene for the pure well of Shakspeare and of nature; to clothe philosophy in the gorgeous and solemn majesty of appropriate music; and to invest passion with a language as burning as its thought, and rapid as its impulse. At that time reflection found its natural channel in metaphysical inquiry, or political speculation; both valuable, perhaps, but neither

profound. It was a bold, and a free, and an inquisitive age, but not one in which thought ran over its set and stationary banks, and watered even the common flowers of verse: not one in which Lucretius could have embodied the dreams of Epicurus; Shakspeare lavished the mines of a superhuman wisdom upon his fairy palaces and enchanted isles; or the Beautifier[1] of this common earth have called forth

> The motion of the spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought;

or Disappointment and Satiety have hallowed their human griefs by a pathos wrought from whatever is magnificent, and grand, and lovely in the unknown universe; or the speculations of a great, but visionary,[2] mind have raised, upon subtlety and doubt, a vast and irregular pile of verse, full of dim-lighted cells, and winding galleries, in which what treasures lie concealed! That was an age in which poetry took one path, and contemplation another; those who were addicted to the latter pursued it in its orthodox roads; and many, whom Nature, perhaps, intended for poets, the wizard Custom converted into speculators or critics.

It was this which gave to Algernon's studies their peculiar hue; while, on the other hand, the taste for the fine arts which then universally prevailed, directed to the creations of painting, rather than those of poetry, more really congenial to his powers, the intense imagination and passion for glory which marked and pervaded the character of the artist.

But as we have seen that that passion for glory made the great characteristic difference between Clarence and Warner, so also did that passion terminate any resemblance which Warner bore to Algernon Mordaunt. With the former, a rank and unwholesome plant, it grew up to the exclusion of all else: with the latter, subdued and regulated,

[1] Wordsworth. [2] Shelley.

it *sheltered*, not *withered*, the virtues by which it was surrounded. With Warner, ambition was a passionate desire to separate himself by fame from the herd of other men; with Mordaunt, to bind himself by charity yet closer to his kind: with the one, it produced a disgust to his species; with the other, a pity and a love: with the one, power was the badge of distinction; with the other, the means to bless! But our story lingers.

It was now the custom of Warner to spend the whole day at his work, and wander out with Clarence, when the evening darkened, to snatch a brief respite of exercise and air. Often, along the lighted and populous streets, would the two young and unfriended competitors for this world's high places, roam with the various crowd, moralising as they went, or holding dim conjecture upon their destinies to be. And often would they linger beneath the portico of some house where, "haunted with great resort," Pleasure and Pomp held their nightly revels, to listen to the music that, through the open windows, stole over the rare exotics with which wealth mimics the southern scents, and floated, mellowing by distance, along the unworthy streets; and while they stood together, silent, and each feeding upon separate thoughts, the artist's pale lip would curl with scorn, as he heard the laugh and the sounds of a frivolous and hollow mirth ring from the crowd within, and startle the air from the silver spell which music had laid upon it. "These," would he say to Clarence, "these are the dupes of the same fever as ourselves: like us, they strive, and toil, and vex their little lives for a distinction from their race. Ambition comes to them, as to all: but they throw for a different prize than we do; theirs is the honour of a day, ours is immortality; yet they take the same labour, and are consumed by the same care. And, fools that they are, with their gilded names and their gaudy trappings, they would shrink in disdain from that comparison with us which we, with a juster fastidiousness, blush at this moment to acknowledge."

From these scenes they would rove on, and, both delighting in contrast, enter some squalid and obscure quarter of the city. There, one night, quiet observers of their kind, they paused beside a group congregated together by some common cause of obscene merriment or unholy fellowship—a group on which low vice had set her sordid and hideous stamp—to gaze and draw strange humours or a motley moral from that depth and ferment of human nature, into whose sink the thousand streams of civilization had poured their dregs and offal.

"You survey these," said the painter, marking each with the curious eye of his profession: "they are a base horde, it is true; but they have their thirst of fame, their aspirations even in the abyss of crime, or the loathsomeness of famished want. Down in yon cellar, where a farthing rushlight glimmers upon haggard cheeks, distorted with the idiotcy of drink—there, in that foul attic, from whose casement you see the beggar's rags hang to dry, or rather to crumble in the reeking and filthy air—farther on, within those walls which, black and heavy as the hearts they hide, close our miserable prospect,—there, even there, in the mildewed dungeon, in the felon's cell, on the very scaffold's self—Ambition hugs her own hope, or scowls upon her own despair. Yes! the inmates of those walls had their perilous game of honour, their 'hazard of the die,' in which vice was triumph, and infamy success. We do but share their passion, though we direct it to a better object."

Pausing for a moment, as his thoughts flowed into a somewhat different channel of his character, Warner continued—"We have now caught a glimpse of the two great visions of mankind; they who riot in palaces, and they who make mirth hideous in rags and hovels: own that it is but a poor survey in either. Can we be contemptible with these, or loathsome with those? Or rather have we not a nobler spark within us, which we have but to fan into a flame, that shall burn for ever, when these miserable meteors sink into the corruption from which they rise?"

"But," observed Clarence, "these are the two extremes; the pinnacle of civilisation, too worn and bare for any more noble and vigorous fruit, and the base upon which the cloud descends in rain and storm. Look to the central portion of society; there the soil is more genial, and its produce more rich."

"Is it so, in truth?" answered Warner; "pardon me, I believe not: the middling classes are as human as the rest. There is the region,—the heart—of Avarice,—systematised, spreading, rotting, the very fungus and leprosy of social states—suspicion, craft, hypocrisy, servility to the great, oppression to the low, the waxlike mimicry of courtly vices, the hardness of flint to humble woes;—thought, feeling, the faculties and impulses of man, all ulcered into one great canker—Gain;—these make the general character of the middling class, the unleavened mass of that mediocrity which it has been the wisdom of the shallow to applaud. Pah! *we* too are of this class, this potter's earth, this paltry mixture of mud and stone; but *we*, my friend, we will knead gold into our clay."

"But look," said Clarence, pointing to the group before them, "look, yon wretched mother, whose voice an instant ago uttered the coarsest accents of maudlin and intoxicated prostitution, is now fostering her infant, with a fondness stamped upon her worn cheek and hollow eye, which might shame the nice maternity of nobles;—and there too, yon wretch whom, in the reckless effrontery of hardened abandonment, we ourselves heard, a few minutes since, boast of his dexterity in theft, and openly exhibit its token—look, he is now, with a Samaritan's own charity, giving the very goods for which his miserable life was risked, to that attenuated and starving stripling! No, Warner, no! even this mass is *not* unleavened. The vilest infamy is not too deep for the Seraph Virtue to descend and illumine its abyss!"

"Out on the weak fools!" said the artist bitterly: "it would be something, if they could be consistent even in

crime!" and, placing his arm in Linden's, he drew him away.

As the picture grew beneath the painter's hand, Clarence was much struck with the outline and expression of countenance given to the regicide Bradshaw.

"They are but an imperfect copy of the living original from whom I have borrowed them," said Warner, in answer to Clarence's remark upon the sternness of the features. "But that original—a relation of mine, is coming here to-day—you shall see him."

While Warner was yet speaking, the person in question entered. His were, indeed, the form and face worthy to be seized by the painter. The peculiarity of his character made him affect a plainness of dress unusual to the day, and approaching to the simplicity, but not the neatness, of Quakerism. His hair,—then with all the better ranks, a principal object of cultivation,—was wild, dishevelled, and, in wiry flakes of the sablest hue, rose abruptly from a forehead on which either thought or passion had written its annals with an iron pen; the lower part of the brow, which overhung the eye, was singularly sharp and prominent; while the lines, or rather furrows, traced under the eyes and nostrils, spoke somewhat of exhaustion and internal fatigue. But this expression was contrasted and contradicted by the firmly compressed lip; the lighted, steady, stern eye; the resolute and even stubborn front joined to proportions strikingly athletic, and a stature of uncommon height.

"Well, Wolfe," said the young painter to the person we have described, "it is indeed a kindness to give me a second sitting."

"Tush, boy!" answered Wolfe, "all men have their vain points, and I own that I am not ill pleased that these rugged features should be assigned, even in fancy, to one of the noblest of those men who judged the mightiest cause in which a country was ever plaintiff—a tyrant criminal and a world witness!"

While Wolfe was yet speaking his countenance, so naturally harsh, took a yet sterner aspect, and the artist, by a happy touch, succeeded in transferring it to the canvas.

"But, after all," continued Wolfe; "it shames me to lend aid to an art frivolous in itself, and almost culpable in times when Freedom wants the head to design, and, perhaps, the hand to execute, far other and nobler works than the blazoning of her past deeds upon perishable canvas."

A momentary anger at the slight put upon his art crossed the pale brow of the artist; but he remembered the character of the man, and continued his work in silence. "You consider then, sir, that these are times in which liberty is attacked?" said Clarence.

"Attacked!" repeated Wolfe—"attacked!" and then suddenly sinking his voice into a sort of sneer—"why, since the event which this painting is designed to commemorate—I know not if we have ever had one solitary gleam of liberty break along the great chaos of jarring prejudice and barbarous law which we term forsooth a glorious constitution. Liberty attacked! no, boy—but it is a time when liberty may be gained."

Perfectly unacquainted with the excited politics of the day, or the growing and mighty spirit which then stirred through the minds of men, Clarence remained silent; but his evident attention flattered the fierce republican, and he proceeded.

"Ay," he said slowly, and as if drinking in a deep and stern joy from his conviction in the truth of the words he uttered—"ay, I have wandered over the face of the earth, and I have warmed my soul at the fires which lay hidden under its quiet surface; I have been in the city and the desert—the herded and banded crimes of the Old World, and the scattered, but bold, hearts which are found among the savannahs of the New; and in either I have beheld that seed sown which, from a mustard grain, too scanty for a bird's beak, shall grow up to be a shelter and a home for the whole family of man. I have looked upon the thrones

of kings, and lo, the anointed ones were in purple and festive pomp; and I looked *beneath* the thrones, and I saw Want and Hunger, and despairing Wrath gnawing the foundations away. I have stood in the streets of that great city where Mirth seems to hold an eternal jubilee, and beheld the noble riot, while the peasant starved; and the priest build altars to Mammon, piled from the earnings of groaning Labour, and cemented with blood and tears. But I looked farther, and saw, in the rear, chains sharpened into swords, misery ripening into justice, and famine darkening into revenge; and I laughed as I beheld, for I knew that the day of the oppressed was at hand."

Somewhat awed by the prophetic tone, though revolted by what seemed to him the novelty, and the fierceness, of the sentiments of the republican, Clarence, after a brief pause, said—

"And what of our own country?

Wolfe's brow darkened. "The oppression here," said he, "has not been so weighty, therefore the reaction will be less strong; the parties are more blended, therefore their separation will be more arduous; the extortion is less strained, therefore the endurance will be more meek; but, soon or late, the struggle must come: bloody will it be, if the strife be even; gentle and lasting, if the people predominate."

"And if the rulers be the strongest?" said Clarence.

"The struggle will be renewed," replied Wolfe, doggedly.

"You still attend those oratorical meetings, cousin, I think?" said Warner.

"I do," said Wolfe; "and if you are not so utterly absorbed in your vain and idle art as to be indifferent to all things nobler, you will learn yourself to take interest in what concerns—I will not say your country—but mankind. For you, young man" (and the republican turned to Clarence), "I would fain hope that life has not already been diverted from the greatest of human objects; if so, come to-morrow night to our assembly, and learn from worthier

lips than mine the precepts and the hopes for which good men live or die."

"I will come at all events to listen, if not to learn," said Clarence, eagerly, for his curiosity was excited. And the republican, having now fulfilled the end of his visit, rose and departed.

CHAPTER XV.

> Bound to suffer persecution
> And martyrdom with resolution,
> T' oppose *himself* against the hate
> And vengeance of the incensed state.—*Hudibras.*

Born of respectable, though not wealthy, parents, John Wolfe was one of those fiery and daring spirits which, previous to some mighty revolution, Fate seems to scatter over various parts of the earth, even those removed from the predestined explosion;—heralds of the events in which they are fitted, though not fated, to be actors. The period at which he is presented to the reader was one considerably prior to that French Revolution so much debated, and so little understood. But some such event, though not foreseen by the common, had been already foreboded by the more enlightened, eye; and Wolfe, from a protracted residence in France, among the most discontented of its freer spirits, had brought hope to that burning enthusiasm which had long made the pervading passion of his existence.

Bold to ferocity, generous in devotion to folly in self-sacrifice, unflinching in his tenets to a degree which rendered their ardour ineffectual to all times, because utterly inapplicable to the present, Wolfe was one of those zealots whose very virtues have the semblance of vice, and whose very capacities for danger become harmless from the rashness of their excess.

It was not among the philosophers and reasoners of France that Wolfe had drawn strength to his opinions:

whatever such companions might have done to his tenets, they would at least have moderated his actions. The philosopher may aid, or expedite, a change; but never does the philosopher, in any age or of any sect, countenance a crime. But of philosophers Wolfe knew little, and probably despised them for their temperance: it was among fanatics—ignorant, but imaginative—that he had strengthened the love, without comprehending the nature, of republicanism. Like Lucian's painter, whose flattery portrayed the one-eyed prince in profile, he viewed only that side of the question in which there was no defect, and gave beauty to the whole by concealing the half. Thus, though on his return to England herding with the common class of his reforming brethren, Wolfe possessed many peculiarities and distinctions of character which, in rendering him strikingly adapted to the purpose of the novelist, must serve as a caution to the reader not to judge of the class by the individual.

With a *class* of Republicans in England there was a strong tendency to support their cause by reasoning. With Wolfe, whose mind was little wedded to logic, all was the offspring of turbulent feelings, which, in rejecting argument, substituted declamation for syllogism. This effected a powerful and irreconcilable distinction between Wolfe and the better part of his comrades; for the habits of cool reasoning, whether true or false, are little likely to bias the mind towards those crimes to which Wolfe's unregulated emotions might possibly urge him, and give to the characters, to which they are a sort of common denominator, something of method and much of similarity. But the feelings—those orators which allow no calculation, and baffle the tameness of comparison—rendered Wolfe alone, unique, eccentric in opinion or action, whether of vice or virtue.

Private ties frequently moderate the ardour of our public enthusiasm. Wolfe had none. His nearest relation was Warner, and it may readily be supposed that with the pen-

sive and contemplative artist he had very little in common. He had never married, nor had ever seemed to wander from his stern and sterile path, in the most transient pursuit of the pleasures of sense. Inflexibly honest, rigidly austere—in his moral character his bitterest enemies could detect no flaw—poor, even to indigence, he had invariably refused all overtures of the government—thrice imprisoned and heavily fined for his doctrines, no fear of a future, no remembrance of the past, punishment could ever silence his bitter eloquence or moderate the passion of his distempered zeal—kindly, though rude, his scanty means were ever shared by the less honest and disinterested followers of his faith; and he had been known for days to deprive himself of food, and for nights of shelter, for the purpose of yielding food and shelter to another.

Such was the man doomed to forsake, through a long and wasted life, every substantial blessing, in pursuit of a shadowy good; with the warmest benevolence in his heart, to relinquish private affections, and to brood even to madness over public offences—to sacrifice everything in a generous, though erring, devotion for that freedom whose cause, instead of promoting, he was calculated to retard; and, while he believed himself the martyr of a high and uncompromising virtue, to close his career with the greatest of human crimes.

CHAPTER XVI.

Faith, methinks his humour is good, and his purse will buy good company.—*The Parson's Wedding.*

When Clarence returned home, after the conversation recorded in our last chapter, he found a note from Talbot, inviting him to meet some friends of the latter at supper that evening. It was the first time Clarence had been asked, and he looked forward with some curiosity and impatience to the hour appointed in the note.

It is impossible to convey any idea of the jealous rancour felt by Mr. and Mrs. Copperas on hearing of this distinction —a distinction which "the perfect courtier" had never once bestowed upon themselves.

Mrs. Copperas tossed her head, too indignant for words; and the stock-jobber, in the bitterness of his soul, affirmed, with a meaning air, "that he dared say, after all, that the old gentleman was not so rich as he gave out."

On entering Talbot's drawing-room, Clarence found about seven or eight people assembled; their names, in proclaiming the nature of the party, indicated that the aim of the host was to combine aristocracy and talent. The literary acquirements and worldly tact of Talbot, joined to the adventitious circumstances of birth and fortune, enabled him to effect this object, so desirable in polished society, far better than we generally find it effected now. The conversation of these guests was light and various. The last *bon mot* of Chesterfield, the last sarcasm of Horace Walpole, Goldsmith's *Traveller*, Shenstone's *Pastorals*, and the attempt of Mrs. Montagu to bring Shakspeare into fashion —in all these subjects the graceful wit and exquisite taste of Talbot shone preeminent; and he had almost succeeded in convincing a profound critic that Gray was a poet more likely to live than Mason, when the servant announced supper.

That was the age of suppers! Happy age! Meal of ease and mirth; when Wine and Night lit the lamp of Wit! Oh, what precious things were said and looked at those banquets of the soul! There epicurism was in the lip as well as the palate, and one had humour for a *hors d'œuvre*, and repartee for an *entremet*. At dinner there is something too pompous, too formal, for the true ease of Table Talk. One's intellectual appetite, like the physical, is coarse but dull. At dinner one is fit only for eating; *after* dinner only for politics. But supper was a glorious relic of the ancients. The bustle of the day had thoroughly wound up the spirit, and every stroke upon the dial-plate of wit was

true to the genius of the hour. The wallet of diurnal anecdote was full and craved unloading. The great meal—that vulgar first love of the appetite—was over, and one now only flattered it into coquetting with another. The mind, disengaged and free, was no longer absorbed in a cutlet or burthened with a joint. The *gourmand* carried the nicety of his physical perception to his moral, and applauded a *bon mot* instead of a *bonne bouche.*

Then, too, one had no necessity to keep a reserve of thought for the after evening; supper was the final consummation, the glorious funeral pyre of day. One could be merry till bedtime without an interregnum. Nay, if in the ardour of convivialism one did—I merely hint at the possibility of such an event—if one *did* exceed the narrow limits of strict ebriety, and open the heart with a ruby key, one had nothing to dread from the cold, or, what is worse, the warm looks of ladies in the drawing-room; no fear that an imprudent word, in the amatory fondness of the fermented blood, might expose one to matrimony and settlements. There was no tame, trite medium of propriety and suppressed confidence, no bridge from board to bed, over which a false step (and your wine-cup is a marvellous corrupter of ambulatory rectitude) might precipitate into an irrecoverable abyss of perilous communication or unwholesome truth. One's pillow became at once the legitimate and natural bourne to "the overheated brain;" and the generous rashness of the cœnatorial reveller was not damped by untimeous caution or ignoble calculation.

But "we have changed all that now." Sobriety has become the successor of suppers; the great ocean of moral encroachment has not left us one little island of refuge. Miserable supper-lovers that we are, like the native Indians of America, a scattered and daily disappearing race, we wander among strange customs, and behold the innovating and invading Dinner spread gradually over the very space of time in which the majesty of Supper once reigned undisputed and supreme!

O, ye heavens, be kind,
And feel, thou earth, for this afflicted race.—WORDSWORTH.

As he was sitting down to the table, Clarence's notice was arrested by a somewhat suspicious and unpleasing occurrence. The supper room was on the ground-floor, and, owing to the heat of the weather, one of the windows, facing the small garden, was left open. Through this window Clarence distinctly saw the face of a man look into the room for one instant, with a prying and curious gaze, and then as instantly disappear. As no one else seemed to remark this incident, and the general attention was somewhat noisily engrossed by the subject of conversation, Clarence thought it not worth while to mention a circumstance for which the impertinence of any neighbouring servant, or drunken passer-by, might easily account. An apprehension, however, of a more unpleasant nature shot across him, as his eye fell upon the costly plate which Talbot rather ostentatiously displayed, and then glanced to the single and aged servant, who was, besides his master, the only male inmate of the house. Nor could he help saying to Talbot, in the course of the evening, that he wondered he was not afraid of hoarding so many articles of value in a house at once so lonely and ill guarded.

"Ill guarded!" said Talbot, rather affronted, "why, I and my servant always sleep here!"

To this Clarence thought it neither prudent nor well-bred to offer further remark.

CHAPTER XVII.

Meetings, or public calls, he never miss'd,
To dictate often, always to assist.

* * * * *

To his experience and his native sense,
He joined a bold imperious eloquence:
The grave, stern look of men informed and wise,
A full command of feature, heart and eyes,
An awe-compelling frown, and fear-inspiring size.—CRABBE.

THE next evening Clarence, mindful of Wolfe's invitation, inquired from Warner (who repaid the contempt of the republican for the painter's calling by a similar feeling for the zealot's) the direction of the oratorical meeting, and repaired there alone. It was the most celebrated club (of that description) of the day, and well worth attending, as a gratification to the curiosity, if not an improvement to the mind.

On entering, he found himself in a long room, tolerably well lighted, and still better filled. The sleepy countenances of the audience, the whispered conversation carried on at scattered intervals, the listless attitudes of some, the frequent yawns of others, the eagerness with which attention was attracted to the opening door, when it admitted some new object of interest, the desperate resolution with which some of the more energetic turned themselves towards the orator, and then, with a faint shake of the head, turned themselves again hopelessly away—were all signs that denoted that no very eloquent declaimer was in possession of the "house." It was, indeed, a singularly dull, monotonous voice which, arising from the upper end of the room, dragged itself on towards the middle, and expired with a sighing sound before it reached the end. The face of the speaker suited his vocal powers; it was small, mean, and of a round stupidity, without anything even in fault that could possibly command attention, or even the excitement of disapprobation: the very garments of the orator seemed dull and heavy,

and, like the Melancholy of Milton, had a "leaden look." Now and then some words, more emphatic than others—stones breaking, as it were with a momentary splash, the stagnation of the heavy stream—produced from three very quiet, unhappy-looking persons, seated next to the speaker, his immediate friends, three single isolated "hears!"

The force of friendship could no farther go.

At last, the orator, having *spoken through*, suddenly stopped; the whole meeting seemed as if a weight had been taken from it; there was a general buzz of awakened energy, each stretched his limbs, and resettled himself in his place,

And turning to his neighbour said,
"Rejoice!"

A pause ensued—the chairman looked round—the eyes of the meeting followed those of the president, with an universal and palpable impatience, towards an obscure corner of the room: the pause deepened for one moment, and then was broken; a voice cried "Wolfe!" and at that signal the whole room shook with the name. The place which Clarence had taken did not allow him to see the object of these cries, till he rose from his situation, and, passing two rows of benches, stood forth in the middle space of the room; then, from one to one went round the general roar of applause; feet stamped, hands clapped, umbrellas set their sharp points to the ground, and walking-sticks thumped themselves out of shape in the universal clamour. Tall, gaunt, and erect, the speaker possessed, even in the mere proportions of his frame, that physical power which never fails, in a popular assembly, to gain attention to mediocrity, and to throw dignity over faults. He looked very slowly round the room, remaining perfectly still and motionless, till the clamour of applause had entirely subsided, and every ear, Clarence's no less eagerly than the rest, was strained, and thirsting to catch the first syllables of his voice.

It was then with a low, very deep, and somewhat hoarse

tone, that he began; and it was not till he had spoken for several minutes that the iron expression of his face altered, that the drooping hand was raised, and that the suppressed, yet powerful, voice began to expand and vary in its volume. He had then entered upon a new department of his subject. The question was connected with the English constitution, and Wolfe was now preparing to put forth, in long and blackened array, the alleged evils of an aristocratical form of government. *Then* it was as if the bile and bitterness of years were poured forth in a terrible and stormy wrath —then his action became vehement, and his eye flashed forth unutterable fire: his voice, solemn, swelling, and increasing with each tone in its height and depth, filled, as with something palpable and perceptible, the shaking walls. The listeners—a various and unconnected group, bound by no tie of faith or of party, many attracted by curiosity, many by the hope of ridicule, some abhorring the tenets expressed, and nearly all disapproving their principles or doubting their wisdom—the listeners, certainly not a group previously formed or moulded into enthusiasm, became rapt and earnest, their very breath forsook them.

Linden had never before that night heard a public speaker; but he was of a thoughtful and rather calculating mind, and his early habits of decision, and the premature cultivation of his intellect, rendered him little susceptible, in general, to the impressions of the vulgar: nevertheless, in spite of himself, he was hurried away by the stream, and found that the force and rapidity of the speaker did not allow him even time for the dissent and disapprobation which his republican maxims and fiery denunciations perpetually excited in a mind aristocratic both by creed and education. At length, after a peroration of impetuous and magnificent invective, the orator ceased.

In the midst of the applause that followed, Clarence left the assembly; he could not endure the thought that any duller or more commonplace speaker should fritter away the spell which yet bound and engrossed his spirit.

CHAPTER XVIII.

At the bottom of the staircase was a small door, which gave way before Nigel, as he precipitated him upon the scene of action, a cocked pistol in one hand, &c.—*Fortunes of Nigel.*

The night, though not utterly dark, was rendered capricious and dim by alternate wind and rain; and Clarence was delayed in his return homeward by seeking occasional shelter from the rapid and heavy showers which hurried by. It was during one of the temporary cessations of the rain that he reached Copperas Bower, and while he was searching in his pockets for the key which was to admit him, he observed two men loitering about his neighbour's house. The light was not sufficient to give him more than a scattered and imperfect view of their motions. Somewhat alarmed, he stood for several moments at the door, watching them as well as he was able; nor did he enter the house till the loiterers had left their suspicious position, and, walking onwards, were hid entirely for him by the distance and darkness.

"It really is a dangerous thing for Talbot," thought Clarence, as he ascended to his apartment, "to keep so many valuables, and only one servant, and that one as old as himself too. However, as I am by no means sleepy, and my room is by no means cool, I may as well open my window, and see if those idle fellows make their reappearance." Suiting the action to the thought, Clarence opened his little casement, and leant wistfully out.

He had no light in his room, for none was ever left for him. This circumstance, however, of course enabled him the better to penetrate the dimness and haze of the night; and, by the help of the fluttering lamps, he was enabled to take a general, though not minute, survey of the scene below.

I think I have before said that there was a garden be-

tween Talbot's house and Copperas Bower; this was bounded by a wall, which confined Talbot's peculiar territory of garden, and this wall, describing a parallelogram, faced also the road. It contained two entrances—one the principal adytus, in the shape of a comely iron gate, the other a wooden door, which, being a private pass, fronted the intermediate garden before mentioned, and was exactly opposite to Clarence's window.

Linden had been more than ten minutes at his post, and had just begun to think his suspicions without foundation, and his vigil in vain, when he observed the same figures he had seen before advance slowly from the distance, and pause by the front gate of Talbot's mansion.

Alarmed and anxious, he redoubled his attention; he stretched himself as far as his safety would permit, out of the window; the lamps, agitated by the wind, which swept by in occasional gusts, refused to grant to his straining sight more than an inaccurate and unsatisfying survey. Presently, a blast, more violent than ordinary, suspended as it were the falling columns of rain, and left Clarence in almost total darkness; it rolled away, and the momentary calm which ensued enabled him to see that one of the men was stooping by the gate, and the other standing apparently on the watch at a little distance. Another gust shook the lamps, and again obscured his view; and when it had passed onward in its rapid course, the men had left the gate, and were in the garden, beneath his window. They crept cautiously, but swiftly, along the opposite wall, till they came to the small door we have before mentioned; here they halted, and one of them appeared to occupy himself in opening the door. Now, then, fear was changed into certainty, and it seemed without doubt that the men, having found some difficulty or danger in forcing the stronger or more public entrance, had changed their quarter of attack. No more time was to be lost; Clarence shouted aloud, but the high wind probably prevented the sound reaching the ears of the burglars, or at least rendering it

dubious and confused. The next moment, and before Clarrence could repeat his alarm, they had opened the door, and were within the neighbouring garden, beyond his view. Very young men, unless their experience has outstripped their youth, seldom have much presence of mind; that quality, which is the opposite to *surprise*, comes to us in those years when nothing seems to us strange or unexpected. But a much older man than Clarence might have well been at a loss to know what conduct to adopt in the situation in which our hero was placed. The visits of the watchman to that (then) obscure and ill-inhabited neighbourhood were more regulated by his indolence than his duty; and Clarence knew that it would be in vain to listen for his cry, or tarry for his assistance. He himself was utterly unarmed, but the stock-jobber had a pair of horse-pistols, and as this recollection flashed upon him, the pause of deliberation ceased.

With a swift step he descended the first flight of stairs, and, pausing at the chamber door of the faithful couple, knocked upon its panels with a loud and hasty summons. The second repetition of the noise produced the sentence, uttered in a very trembling voice, of "Who's there?"

"It is I, Clarence Linden," replied our hero; "lose no time in opening the door."

This answer seemed to reassure the valorous stock-jobber. He slowly undid the bolt, and turned the key.

"In Heaven's name, what do you want, Mr. Linden?" said he.

"Ay," cried a sharp voice from the more internal recesses of the chamber, "what do you want, sir, disturbing us in the bosom of our family, and at the dead of night?"

With a rapid voice, Clarence repeated what he had seen, and requested the broker to accompany him to Talbot's house, or at least to lend him his pistols.

"He shall do no such thing," cried Mrs. Copperas. "Come here, Mr. C., and shut the door directly."

"Stop, my love," said the stock-jobber, "stop a moment."

"For God's sake," cried Clarence, "make no delay; the poor old man may be murdered by this time."

"It's no business of mine," said the stock-jobber.

"If Adolphus had not broken the rattle I would not have minded the trouble of springing it; but you are very much mistaken if you think I am going to leave my warm bed in order to have my throat cut."

"Then give me your pistols," cried Clarence; "I will go alone."

"I shall commit no such folly," said the stock-jobber; "if you are murdered, I may have to answer it to your friends, and pay for your burial. Besides, you owe us for your lodgings—go to your bed, young man, as I shall to mine." And so saying, Mr. Copperas proceeded to close the door.

But enraged at the brutality of the man, and excited by the urgency of the case, Clarence did not allow him so peaceable a retreat. With a strong and fierce grasp, he seized the astonished Copperas by the throat, and shaking him violently, forced his own entrance into the sacred nuptial chamber.

"By Heaven," cried Linden, in a savage and stern tone, for his blood was up, "I will twist your coward's throat, and save the murderer his labour, if you do not instantly give me up your pistols."

The stock-jobber was panic-stricken. "Take them," he cried, in the extremest terror; "there they are on the chimney-piece close by."

"Are they primed and loaded?" said Linden, not relaxing his grip.

"Yes, yes!" said the stock-jobber, "loose my throat, or you will choke me!" and at that instant, Clarence felt himself clasped by the invading hands of Mrs. Copperas.

"Call off your wife," said he, "or I *will* choke you!" and he tightened his hold, "and tell her to give me the pistols."

The next moment Mrs. Copperas extended the debated weapons towards Clarence. He seized them, flung the poor

stock-jobber against the bedpost, hurried down stairs, opened the back door, which led into the garden, flew across the intervening space, arrived at the door, and entering Talbot's garden, paused to consider what was the next step to be taken.

A person equally brave as Clarence, but more cautious, would not have left the house without alarming Mr. de Warens, even in spite of the failure with his master, but Linden only thought of the pressure of time, and the necessity of expedition, and he would have been a very unworthy hero of romance had he felt fear for two antagonists, with a brace of pistols at his command, and a high and good action in view.

After a brief, but decisive, halt, he proceeded rapidly round the house, in order to ascertain at which part the ruffians had admitted themselves, should they (as indeed there was little doubt) have already effected their entrance.

He found the shutters of one of the principal rooms on the ground-floor had been opened, and through the aperture he caught the glimpse of a moving light, which was suddenly obscured. As he was about to enter, the light again flashed out: he drew back just in time, carefully screened himself behind the shutter, and, through one of the chinks, observed what passed within. Opposite to the window was a door which conducted to the hall and principal staircase; this door was open, and in the hall at the foot of the stairs, Clarence saw two men; one carried a dark lantern, from which the light proceeded, and some tools, of the nature of which Clarence was naturally ignorant: this was a middle-sized muscular man, dressed in the rudest garb of an ordinary labourer; the other was much taller and younger, and his dress was of a rather less ignoble fashion.

"Hist! hist!" said the taller one, in a low tone, "did you not hear a noise, Ben?"

"Not a pin fall; but stow your whids, man!"

This was all that Clarence heard in a connected form;

but as the wretches paused, in evident doubt how to proceed, he caught two or three detached words, which his ingenuity readily formed into sentences. "No, no! sleeps to the left—old man above—plate chest—we must have the blunt too. Come, track up the dancers, and dowse the glim." And at the last words the light was extinguished, and Clarence's quick and thirsting ear just caught their first steps on the stairs—they died away—and all was hushed.

It had several times occurred to Clarence to rush from his hiding-place, and fire at the ruffians, and perhaps that measure would have been the wisest he could have taken; but Clarence had never discharged a pistol in his life, and he felt, therefore, that his aim must be uncertain enough to render a favourable position and a short distance essential requisites. Both these were, at present, denied to him; and although he saw no weapons about the persons of the villains, yet he imagined they would not have ventured on so dangerous an expedition without fire-arms; and if he failed, as would have been most probable, in his two shots, he concluded that, though the alarm would be given, his own fate would be inevitable.

If this was reasoning upon false premises, for housebreakers seldom or never carry loaded fire-arms, and never stay for revenge, when their safety demands escape, Clarence may be forgiven for not knowing the customs of housebreakers, and for not making the very best of an extremely novel and dangerous situation.

No sooner did he find himself in total darkness, than he bitterly reproached himself for his late backwardness, and, inwardly resolving not again to miss any opportunity which presented itself, he entered the window, groped along the room into the hall, and found his way very slowly, and after much circumlocution, to the staircase.

He had just gained the summit, when a loud cry broke upon the stillness: it came from a distance, and was instantly hushed; but he caught, at brief intervals, the sound

of angry and threatening voices. Clarence bent down anxiously, in the hope that some solitary ray would escape through the crevice of the door within which the robbers were engaged. But though the sounds came from the same floor as that on which he now trod, they seemed far and remote, and not a gleam of light broke the darkness.

He continued, however, to feel his way in the direction from which the sounds proceeded, and soon found himself in a narrow gallery; the voices seemed more loud and near, as he advanced, at last he distinctly heard the words—

"Will you not confess where it is placed?"

"Indeed, indeed," replied an eager and earnest voice, which Clarence recognized as Talbot's, "this is all the money I have in the house—the plate is above—my servant has the key—take it—take all—but save his life and mine."

"None of your gammon," said another and rougher voice than that of the first speaker: "we know you have more blunt than this—a paltry sum of fifty pounds, indeed!"

"Hold!" cried the other ruffian, "here is a picture set with diamonds, that will do, Ben. Let go the old man."

Clarence was now just at hand, and probably from a sudden change in the position of the dark lantern within, a light abruptly broke from beneath the door, and streamed along the passage.

"No, no, no!" cried the old man, in a loud yet tremulous voice—"no, not that, anything else, but I will defend *that* with my life."

"Ben, my lad," said the ruffian, "twist the old fool's neck: we have no more time to lose."

At that very moment the door was flung violently open, and Clarence Linden stood within three paces of the reprobates and their prey. The taller villain had a miniature in his hand, and the old man clung to his legs with a convulsive but impotent clasp; the other fellow had already his gripe upon Talbot's neck, and his right hand grasped a long case-knife.

With a fierce and flashing eye, and a cheek deadly pale

with internal and resolute excitement, Clarence confronted the robbers.

"Thank Heaven," cried he, "I am not too late!" And advancing yet another step towards the shorter ruffian, who, struck mute with the suddenness of the apparition, still retained his grasp of the old man, he fired his pistol, with a steady and close aim; the ball penetrated the wretch's brain, and without sound or sigh he fell down dead, at the very feet of his just destroyer. The remaining robber had already meditated, and a second more sufficed to accomplish, his escape. He sprang towards the door: the ball whizzed beside him, but touched him not. With a safe and swift step, long inured to darkness, he fled along the passage; and Linden, satisfied with the vengeance he had taken upon his comrade, did not harass him with an unavailing pursuit.

Clarence turned to assist Talbot. The old man was stretched upon the floor insensible, but his hand grasped the miniature which the plunderer had dropped in his flight and terror, and his white and ashen lip was pressed convulsively upon the recovered treasure.

Linden raised and placed him on his bed, and while employed in attempting to revive him, the ancient domestic, alarmed by the report of the pistol, came, poker in hand, to his assistance.

By little and little they recovered the object of their attention.

His eyes rolled wildly round the room, and he muttered—

"Off, off! ye shall not rob me of my only relic of her—where is it?—have you got it!—the picture, the picture!"

"It is here sir, it is here," said the old servant; "it is in your own hand."

Talbot's eye fell upon it; he gazed at it for some moments, pressed it to his lips, and then, sitting erect, and looking wildly round, he seemed to awaken to the sense of his late danger and his present deliverance.

CHAPTER XIX.

Ah, fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,
  Or the death they bear,
The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove,
  With the wings of care!
In the battle—in the darkness—in the need,
  Shall mine cling to thee!
Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
  It may bring to thee!—SHELLEY.

LETTER FROM ALGERNON MORDAUNT TO ISABEL ST. LEGER.

"You told me not to write to you. You know how long, but not how uselessly I have obeyed you. Did you think, Isabel, that my love was of that worldly and common order which requires a perpetual aliment to support it? Did you think that, if you forbade the stream to flow visibly, its sources would be exhausted, and its channel dried up? This may be the passion of others; it is not mine. Months have passed since we parted, and since then you have not seen me: this letter is the first token you have received from a remembrance from which cannot die. But do you think that I have not watched, and tended upon you, and gladdened my eyes with gazing on your beauty, when you have not dreamed that I was by? Ah, Isabel, your heart should have told you of it—*mine* would, had *you* been so near me!

"You receive no letters from me. it is true—think you that my hand and heart are therefore idle? No. I write to you a thousand burning lines: I pour out my soul to you: I tell you of all I suffer: my thoughts, my actions, my very dreams, are all traced upon the paper. I send them not to you, but I read them over and over, and when I come to your name, I pause, and shut my eyes, and then 'Fancy has her power,' and lo! 'you are by my side!'

"Isabel, our love has not been a holiday and joyous sentiment; but I feel a solemn and unalterable conviction that our union is ordained.

"Others have many objects to distract and occupy the thoughts which are once forbidden a single direction, but we have *none*. At least, to me you are everything. Pleasure, splendour, ambition, all are merged into one great and eternal thought, and that is *you!*

"Others have told me, and I believed them, that I was hard, and cold, and stern—so perhaps I was before I knew you, but now I am weaker and softer than a child. There is a stone which is of all the hardest and the chilliest, but when once set on fire it is unquenchable. You smile at my image, perhaps, and I should smile if I saw it in the writing of another; for all that I have ridiculed in romance, as exaggerated, seems now to me too cool and too commonplace for reality.

"But this is not what I meant to write to you; you are ill, dearest and noblest Isabel, you are ill! I am the cause, and you conceal it from me; and you would rather pine away and die than suffer *me* to lose one of those worldly advantages which are in *my* eyes but as dust in the balance,—it is in vain to deny it. I heard from others of your impaired health; I have witnessed it myself. Do you remember last night, when you were in the room with your relations, and they made you sing—a song too which you used to sing to me, and when you came to the second stanza your voice failed you, and you burst into tears, and *they*, instead of soothing, reproached and chid you, and you answered not, but wept on? Isabel, do you remember that a sound was heard at the window, and a groan? Even they were startled, but they thought it was the wind, for the night was dark and stormy, and they saw not that it was *I*—yes, my devoted, my generous love, it was I who gazed upon you, and from whose heart that voice of anguish was wrung; and I saw your cheek was pale and thin, and that the canker at the core had preyed upon the blossom.

"Think you, after this, that I could keep silence or obey your request? No, dearest, no! Is not my happiness your object? I have the vanity to believe so; and am *I* not the best judge how that happiness is to be secured? I tell you, I say it calmly, coldly, dispassionately—not from the imagination, not even from the heart, but solely from the *reason*—that I can bear everything rather than the loss of *you;* and that if the evil of my love scathe and destroy you, I shall consider and curse myself as your murderer! Save me from this extreme of misery, my—yes, *my* Isabel! I shall be at the copse where we have so often met before, to-morrow, at noon. You will meet me; and if I cannot *convince* you, I will not ask you to be *persuaded.*

"A. M."

And Isabel read this letter, and placed it at her heart, and felt less miserable than she had done for months; for, though she wept, there was sweetness in the tears which the assurance of *his* love, and the tenderness of his remonstrance, had called forth. She met him—how could she refuse? and the struggle was past. Though not "convinced" she *was* "persuaded;" for her heart, which refused his reasonings, melted at his reproaches and his grief. But she would not consent to unite her fate with him at once, for the evils of that step to his interests were immediate and near; she was only persuaded to permit their correspondence and occasional meetings, in which, however imprudent they might be for herself, the disadvantages to her lover were distant and remote. It was of him only that she thought; for him she trembled; for him she was the coward and the woman; for herself she had no fears, and no forethought.

And Algernon was worthy of this devoted love, and returned it as it was given. Man's love, in general, is a selfish and exacting sentiment: it demands every sacrifice, and refuses all. But the nature of Mordaunt was essentially high and disinterested, and his honour, like his love,

was not that of the world; it was the ethereal and spotless honour of a lofty and generous mind, the honour which custom can neither give nor take away; and, however impatiently he bore the deferring of a union, in which he deemed that *he* was the only sufferer, he would not have uttered a sigh or urged a prayer for that union, could it, in the minutest or remotest degree, have injured or degraded *her*.

These are the hearts and natures which make life beautiful: these are the shrines which sanctify love: these are the diviner spirits for whom there is kindred and commune with everything exalted and holy in heaven and earth. For them, Nature unfolds her hoarded poetry and her hidden spells: for their steps are the lonely mountains, and the still woods have a murmur for their ears: for them there is strange music in the wave, and in the whispers of the light leaves, and rapture in the voices of the birds: their souls drink, and are saturated with the mysteries of the Universal Spirit, which the philosophy of old times believed to be God Himself. They look upon the sky with a gifted vision, and its dove-like quiet descends and overshadows their hearts: the Moon and the Night are to them wells of Castalian inspiration and golden dreams; and it was one of *them* who, gazing upon the Evening Star, felt in the inmost sanctuary of his soul its mysterious harmonies with his most worshipped hope, his most passionate desire, and dedicated it to—LOVE.

CHAPTER XX.

Maria. Here's the brave old man's love,
Bianca. That loves the young man.
The Woman's Prize; or, The Tamer Tamed.

"No, my dear Clarence, you have placed confidence in me, and it is now my duty to return it; you have told me your history and origin, and I will inform you of mine, but

not yet. At present we will talk of you. You have conferred upon me what our universal love of life makes us regard as the greatest of human obligations; and though I can bear a large burden of gratitude, yet I must throw off an atom or two in using my little power in *your* behalf. Nor is this all: your history has also given you another tie upon my heart, and in granting you a *legitimate* title to my good offices, removes any scruple you might otherwise have had in accepting them.

"I have just received this letter from Lord ——, the minister for foreign affairs: you will see that he has appointed you to the office of *attaché* at ——. You will also oblige me by looking over this other letter at your earliest convenience; the trifling sum which it contains will be repeated every quarter: it will do very well for an *attaché:* when you are an ambassador, why, we must equip you by a mortgage on Scarsdale; and now, my dear Clarence, tell me all about the Copperases."

I need not say who was the speaker of the above sentences: sentences apparently of a very agreeable nature; nevertheless, Clarence seemed to think otherwise, for the tears gushed into his eyes, and he was unable for several moments to reply.

"Come, my young friend," said Talbot, kindly; "I have no near relation among whom I can choose a son I like better than you, nor you any at present from whom you might select a more desirable father: consequently, you must let me look upon you as my own flesh and blood; and, as I intend to be a very strict and peremptory father, I expect the most silent and scrupulous obedience to my commands. My first parental order to you is to put up those papers, and to say nothing more about them; for I have a great deal to talk to you about upon other subjects."

And by these and similar kind-hearted and delicate remonstrances, the old man gained his point. From that moment Clarence looked upon him with the grateful and

venerating love of a son; and I question very much, if Talbot had really been the father of our hero, whether he would have liked so handsome a successor half so well.

The day after this arrangement, Clarence paid his debt to the Copperases, and removed to Talbot's house. With this event commenced a new era in his existence: he was no longer an outcast and a wanderer: out of alien ties he had wrought the link of a close and even paternal friendship: life, brilliant in its prospects, and elevated in its ascent, opened flatteringly before him; and the fortune and courage, which had so well provided for the present, were the best omens and auguries for the future.

One evening, when the opening autumn had made its approaches felt, and Linden and his new parent were seated alone by a blazing fire, and had come to a full pause in their conversation, Talbot, shading his face with the friendly pages of the *Whitehall Evening Paper*, as if to protect it from the heat, said—

"I told you, the other day, that I would give you, at some early opportunity, a brief sketch of my life. This confidence is due to you in return for yours; and since you will soon leave me, and I am an old man, whose life no prudent calculation can fix, I may as well choose the present time to favour you with my confessions."

Clarence expressed and looked his interest, and the old man thus commenced—

THE HISTORY OF A VAIN MAN.

"I was quite a favourite of my parents, for I was quick at my lessons, and my father said I inherited my genius from him; and comely in my person, and my mother said that my good looks came from her. So the honest pair saw in their eldest son the union of their own attractions, and thought they were making much of themselves when they lavished their caresses upon me. They had another son, poor Arthur—I think I see him now! He was a shy,

quiet, subdued boy, of a very plain personal appearance. My father and mother were vain, showy, ambitious people of the world, and they were as ashamed of my brother as they were proud of myself. However, he afterwards entered the army, and distinguished himself highly. He died in battle, leaving an only daughter, who married, *as you know*, a nobleman of high rank. Her subsequent fate it is now needless to relate.

"Petted and pampered from my childhood, I grew up with a profound belief in my own excellences, and a feverish and irritating desire to impress every one who came in my way with the same idea. There is a sentence in Sir William Temple, which I have often thought of with a painful conviction of its truth: 'A restlessness in men's minds to be something they are not, and to have something they have not, is the root of all immorality.'[1] At school, I was confessedly the cleverest boy in my remove: and, what I valued equally as much, I was the best cricketer of the best eleven. Here, then, you will say my vanity was satisfied—no such thing! There was a boy who shared my room, and was next me in the school; we were, therefore, always thrown together. He was a great, stupid, lubberly cub, equally ridiculed by the masters and disliked by the boys: will you believe that this individual was the express and almost sole object of my envy? He was more than my rival, he was my superior; and I hated him with all the unleavened bitterness of my soul.

"I have said he was my superior—it was in one thing. He could balance a stick, nay, a cricket-bat, a poker, upon his chin, and I could not; you laugh, and so can I now, but it was no subject of laughter to me then. This circumstance, trifling as it may appear to you, poisoned my enjoyment. The boy saw my envy, for I could not conceal it; and as all fools are malicious, and most fools ostentatious, he took a particular pride and pleasure in displaying his dexterity, and 'showing off' my discontent. You can

[1] And of all good.—*Author.*

form no idea of the extent to which this petty insolence vexed and disquieted me. Even in my sleep, the clumsy and grinning features of this tormenting imp haunted me like a spectre: my visions were nothing but chins and cricket-bats; walking-sticks, sustaining themselves upon human excrescences, and pokers dancing a hornpipe upon the tip of a nose. I assure you that I have spent hours in secret seclusion practising to rival my hated comrade, and my face—see how one vanity quarrels with another—was little better than a mass of bruises and discolorations.

I actually became so uncomfortable as to write home, and request to leave the school. I was then about sixteen, and my indulgent father, in granting my desire, told me that I was too old and too advanced in my learning to go to any other academic establishment than the University. The day before I left the school, I gave, as was usually the custom, a breakfast to all my friends; the circumstance of my tormentor's sharing my room obliged me to invite him among the rest. However, I was in high spirits, and being a universal favourite with my schoolfellows, I succeeded in what was always to me an object of social ambition, and set the table on a roar: yet, when our festival was nearly expired, and I began to allude more particularly to my approaching departure, my vanity was far more gratified, for my feelings were far more touched, by observing the regret, and receiving the good wishes, of all my companions. I still recall that hour as one of the proudest and happiest of my life: but it had its immediate reverse. My evil demon put it into my tormentor's head to give me one last parting pang of jealousy. A large umbrella happened accidentally to be in my room: Crompton—such was my schoolfellow's name—saw and seized it; 'Look here, Talbot,' said he with his taunting and hideous sneer, 'you can't do this;' and placing the point of the umbrella upon his forehead, just above the eyebrow, he performed various antics round the room.

"At that moment I was standing by the fireplace, and

conversing with two boys on whom, above all others, I wished to leave a favourable impression. My foolish soreness on this one subject had been often remarked, and as I turned in abrupt and awkward discomposure, from the exhibition, I observed my two schoolfellows smile, and exchange looks. I am not naturally passionate, and even at that age I had, in ordinary cases, great self-command; but this observation, and the cause which led to it, threw me off my guard. Whenever we are utterly under the command of one feeling, we cannot be said to have our reason: at that instant I literally believe I was beside myself. What! in the very flush of the last triumph that that scene would ever afford me; amidst the last regrets of my early friends, to whom I fondly hoped to bequeath a long and brilliant remembrance, to be thus bearded by a contemptible rival, and triumphed over by a pitiful, yet insulting, superiority; to close my condolences with laughter; to have the final solemnity of my career thus terminating in mockery; and ridicule substituted as an ultimate reminiscence in the place of an admiring regret; all this, too, to be effected by one so long hated, one whom I was the only being forbidden the comparative happiness of despising? I could not brook it; the insult—the insulter were too revolting. As the unhappy buffoon approached me, thrusting his distorted face towards mine, I seized and pushed him aside, with a brief curse and a violent hand. The sharp point of the umbrella slipped; my action gave it impetus and weight: it penetrated his eye, and—spare me, spare me the rest."[1]

The old man bent down, and paused for a few moments before he resumed.

"Crompton lost his eye, but my punishment was as severe as his. People who are very vain are usually equally susceptible, and they who feel one thing acutely will so feel another. For years, ay, for many years afterwards, the recollection of my folly goaded me with the bitterest

[1] This instance of vanity, and indeed the whole of Talbot's history, is literally from facts.

and most unceasing remorse. Had I committed murder, my conscience could scarce have afflicted me more severely. I did not regain my self-esteem till I had somewhat repaired the injury I had done. Long after that time Crompton was in prison, in great and overwhelming distress. I impoverished myself to release him; I sustained him and his family till fortune rendered my assistance no longer necessary; and no triumphs were ever more sweet to me than the sacrifice I was forced to submit to, in order to restore him to prosperity.

"It is natural to hope that this accident had at least the effect of curing me of my fault; but it requires philosophy in yourself, or your advisers, to render remorse of future avail. How could I amend my fault, when I was not even aware of it? Smarting under the effects I investigated not the cause, and I attributed to irascibility and vindictiveness what had a deeper and more dangerous origin.

"At college, in spite of all my advantages of birth, fortune, health, and intellectual acquirements, I had many things besides the one enemy of remorse to corrode my tranquillity of mind. I was sure to find some one to excel me in something, and this was enough to embitter my peace. Our living Goldsmith is my favourite poet, and I perhaps insensibly venerate the genius the more because I find something congenial in the infirmities of the man. *I* can fully credit the anecdotes recorded of him. *I*, too, could once have been jealous of a puppet handling a spontoon. *I*, too, could once have been miserable if two ladies at the theatre were more the objects of attention than myself! You, Clarence, will not despise me for this confession; those who knew me less would. Fools! there is no man so great as not to have some littleness more predominant than all his greatness. Our virtues are the dupes and often only the playthings, of our follies!

"I entered the world—with what advantages and what avidity!—I smile, but it is mournfully, in looking back to that day. Though rich, high-born, and good-looking, I

possessed not one of these three qualities in that eminence which could alone satisfy my love of superiority and desire of effect. I knew this somewhat humiliating truth, for, though vain, I was not conceited. Vanity, indeed, is the very antidote to conceit, for while the former makes us all *nerve* to the opinion of others, the latter is perfectly satisfied with its opinion of itself.

"I knew this truth, and as Pope, if he could not be the greatest of poets, resolved to be the most correct, so I strove, since I could not be the handsomest, the wealthiest, and the noblest of my contemporaries, to excel them, at least, in the grace and consummateness of manner; and in this, after incredible pains, after diligent apprenticeship in the world, and intense study in the closet, I at last flattered myself that I had succeeded. Of all success, while we are yet in the flush of youth, and its capacities of enjoyment, I can imagine none more intoxicating or gratifying than the success of society, and I had certainly some years of its triumph and *éclat*. I was courted, followed,—flattered, and sought by the most envied and fastidious circles in England, and even in Paris; for society, so indifferent to those who disdain it, overwhelms with its gratitude—profuse though brief—those who devote themselves to its amusement. The victim to sameness and *ennui*, it offers, like the pallid and luxurious Roman, a reward for a new pleasure; and, as long as our industry or talent can afford the pleasure, the reward is ours. At that time, then, I reaped the full harvest of my exertions; the disappointment and vexation were of later date.

"I now come to the great era of my life—Love. Among my acquaintance was Lady Mary Walden, a widow of high birth, and noble, though not powerful, connexions. She lived about twenty miles from London, in a beautiful retreat; and, though not rich, her jointure, rendered ample by economy, enabled her to indulge her love of society. Her house was always as full as its size would permit, and I was among the most welcome of its visitors. She had an

only daughter—even now, through the dim mists of years, that beautiful and fairy form rises still and shining before me, undimmed by sorrow, unfaded by time. Caroline Walden was the object of general admiration, and her mother, who attributed the avidity with which her invitations were accepted by all the wits and fine gentlemen of the day to the charms of her own conversation, little suspected the face and wit of her daughter to be the magnet of attraction. I had no idea at that time of marriage, still less could I have entertained such a notion, unless the step had greatly exalted my rank and prospects.

"The poor and powerless Caroline Walden was therefore the last person for whom I had what the jargon of mothers term 'serious intentions.' However, I was struck with her exceeding loveliness, and amused by the vivacity of her manners; moreover, my vanity was excited by the hope of distancing all my competitors for the smiles of the young beauty. Accordingly I laid myself out to please, and neglected none of those subtle and almost secret attentions which, of all flatteries, are the most delicate and successful: and I succeeded. Caroline loved me with all the earnestness and devotion which characterise the love of woman. It never occurred to her that I was only trifling with those affections which it seemed so ardently my intention to win. She knew that my fortune was large enough to dispense with the necessity of fortune with my wife, and in birth she would have equalled men of greater pretensions to myself; added to this, long adulation had made her sensible, though not vain, of her attractions, and she listened with a credulous ear to the insinuated flatteries I was so well accustomed to instil.

"Never shall I forget—no, though I double my present years—the shock, the wildness of despair with which she first detected the selfishness of my homage; with which she saw that I had only mocked her trusting simplicity; and that while she had been lavishing the richest treasures of her heart before the burning altars of Love, my idol had

been Vanity, and my offerings deceit. She tore herself from the profanation of my grasp; she shrouded herself from my presence. All interviews with me were rejected; all my letters returned to me unopened; and though, in the repentance of my heart, I entreated, I urged her to accept vows that were no longer insincere, her pride became her punishment, as well as my own. In a moment of bitter and desperate feeling, she accepted the offers of another, and made the marriage bond a fatal and irrevocable barrier to our reconciliation and union.

"Oh! how I now cursed my infatuation! how passionately I recalled the past! how coldly I turned from the hollow and false world, to whose service I had sacrificed my happiness, to muse and madden over the prospects I had destroyed and the loving and noble heart I had rejected! Alas! after all, what is so ungrateful as that world for which we renounce so much? Its votaries resemble the Gymnosophists of old, and while they profess to make their chief end pleasure, we can only learn that they expose themselves to every torture and every pain!

"Lord Merton, the man whom Caroline now called husband, was among the wealthiest and most dissipated of his order; and two years after our separation I met once more with the victim of my unworthiness, blazing in 'the full front' of courtly splendour; the leader of its gaieties, and the cynosure of her followers. Intimate with the same society, we were perpetually cast together, and Caroline was proud of displaying the indifference towards me, which, if she felt not, she had at least learnt artfully to assume. This indifference was her ruin. The depths of my evil passion were again sounded and aroused, and I resolved yet to humble the pride and conquer the coldness which galled to the very quick the morbid acuteness of my self-love. I again attached myself to her train—I bowed myself to the very dust before her. What to me were her chilling reply and disdainful civilities?—only still stronger excitements to persevere.

"I spare you and myself the gradual progress of my schemes. A woman may recover her first passion, it is true; but then she must replace it with another. That other was denied to Caroline: she had not even children to engross her thoughts and to occupy her affections; and the gay world, which to many becomes an object, was to her only an escape.

"Clarence, my triumph came! Lady Walden (who had never known our secret) invited me to her house: Caroline was there. In the same spot where we had so often stood before, and in which her earliest affections were insensibly breathed away, in that same spot I drew from her colourless and trembling lips the confession of her weakness, the restored and pervading power of my remembrance.

"But Caroline was a proud and virtuous woman: even while her heart betrayed her, her mind resisted; and in the very avowal of her unconquered attachment, she renounced and discarded me for ever. I was not an ungenerous, though a vain man; but my generosity was wayward, tainted, and imperfect. I could have borne the separation; I could have severed myself from her; I could have flown to the uppermost parts of the earth; I could have hoarded there my secret, yet unextinguished love, and never disturbed her quiet by a murmur; but then the fiat of separation must have come from *me!* My vanity could not bear that *her* lips should reject me; that *my* part was not to be the nobility of sacrifice, but the submission of resignation. However, my better feelings were aroused, and though I could not stifle, I concealed, my selfish repinings. We parted: she returned to town, I buried myself in the country; and, amidst the literary studies to which, though by fits and starts, I was passionately devoted, I endeavoured to forget my ominous and guilty love.

"But I was then too closely bound to the world not to be perpetually reminded of its events. My retreat was thronged with occasional migrators from London; my books were mingled with the news and scandal of the day.

All spoke to me of Lady Merton; not as I loved to picture her to myself, pale and sorrowful, and brooding over my image; but gay, dissipated, the dispenser of smiles, the prototype of joy. I contrasted this account of her with the melancholy and gloom of my own feelings, and I resented her seeming happiness as an insult to myself.

"In this angry and fretful mood I returned to London. My empire was soon resumed; and now, Linden, comes the most sickening part of my confessions. Vanity is a growing and insatiable disease: what seems to its desires as wealth to-day, to-morrow it rejects as poverty. I was at first contented to know that I was beloved; by degrees, slow, yet sure, I desired that others should know it also. I longed to display my power over the celebrated and courted Lady Merton; and to put the last crown to my reputation and importance. The envy of others is the food of our own self-love. Oh, you know not, you dream not, of the galling mortifications to which a proud woman, whose love commands her pride, is subjected. I imposed upon Caroline the most humiliating, the most painful trials; I would allow her to see none but those I pleased; to go to no place where I withheld my consent; and I hesitated not to exert and testify my power over her affections, in proportion to the publicity of the opportunity.

"Yet, with all this littleness, would you believe that I loved Caroline with the most ardent and engrossing passion? I have paused behind her, in order to kiss the ground she trod on; I have stayed whole nights beneath her window, to catch one glimpse of her passing form, even though I had spent hours of the daytime in her society; and, though my love burned and consumed me like a fire I would not breathe a single wish against her innocence, or take advantage of my power to accomplish what I knew, from her virtue and pride, no atonement could possibly repay. Such are the inconsistencies of the heart, and such, while they prevent our perfection, redeem us from the utterness of vice! Never, even in my wildest days, was I

blind to the glory of virtue, yet never, till my latest years, have I enjoyed the faculty to avail myself of my perception. I resembled the mole, which by Boyle is supposed to possess the idea of light, but to be unable to comprehend the objects on which it shines.

"Among the varieties of my prevailing sin, was a weakness common enough to worldly men. While I ostentatiously played off the love I had *excited* I could not bear to show the love I *felt*. In our country, and perhaps, though in a less degree, in all other highly artificial states, enthusiasm, or even feeling of any kind is ridiculous; and I could not endure the thought that my treasured and secret affections should be dragged from their retreat to be cavilled and carped at by

"Every beardless, vain comparative.

"This weakness brought on the catastrophe of my love; for, mark me, Clarence, it is through our weaknesses that our vices are punished! One night I went to a masquerade; and, while I was sitting in a remote corner, three of my acquaintances, whom I recognised, though they knew it not, approached and rallied me upon my *romantic* attachment to Lady Merton. One of them was a woman of a malicious and sarcastic wit; the other two were men whom I disliked, because their pretensions interfered with mine; they were diners-out, and anecdote-mongers. Stung to the quick by their sarcasms and laughter, I replied in a train of mingled arrogance and jest; at last I spoke slightingly of the person in question; and these profane and false lips dared not only to disown the faintest love to that being who was more to me than all on earth, but even to speak of herself with ridicule, and her affection with disdain.

"In the midst of this, I turned and beheld, within hearing, a figure which I knew upon the moment. O Heaven! the burning shame and agony of that glance! It raised its mask—I saw that blanched cheek, and that trembling lip! I knew that the iron had indeed entered into her soul.

"Clarence, I never beheld her again alive. Within a week from that time she was a corpse. She had borne much, suffered much, and murmured not; but this shock pressed too hard, came too home, and from the hand of him for whom she would have sacrificed all! I stood by her in death; I beheld my work; and I turned away, a wanderer and a pilgrim upon the face of the earth. Verily, I have had my reward."

The old man paused, in great emotion; and Clarence, who could offer him no consolation, did not break the silence. In a few minutes Talbot continued—

"From that time the smile of woman was nothing to me; I seemed to grow old in a single day. Life lost to me all its objects. A dreary and desert blank stretched itself before me—the sounds of creation had only in my ears one voice—the past, the future, one image. I left my country for twenty years, and lived an idle and hopeless man in the various courts of the Continent.

"At the age of fifty I returned to England; the wounds of the past had not disappeared, but they were scarred over; and I longed, like the rest of my species, to have an object in view. At that age, if we have seen much of mankind, and possess the talents to profit by our knowledge, we must be one of two sects: a politician or a philosopher. My time was not yet arrived for the latter, so I resolved to become the former; but this was denied me, for my vanity had assumed a different shape. It is true that I cared no longer for the reputation women can bestow; but I was eager for the applause of men, and I did not like the long labour necessary to attain it. I wished to make a short road to my object, and I eagerly followed every turn but the right one, in the hopes of its leading me sooner to my goal.

"The great characteristic of a vain man in contradistinction to an ambitious man, his eternal obstacle to a high and honourable fame, is this: he requires for any expenditure of trouble too speedy a reward; he cannot wait for

years, and climb, step by step, to a lofty object: whatever he attempts, he must seize at a single grasp. Added to this, he is incapable of an exclusive attention to one end; the universality of his cravings is not contented, unless it devours all; and thus he is perpetually doomed to fritter away his energies by grasping at the trifling baubles within his reach, and in gathering the worthless fruit which a single sun can mature.

"This, then, was my fault, and the cause of my failure. I could not give myself up to finance, nor puzzle through the intricacies of commerce: even the common parliamentary drudgeries of constant attendance and late hours were insupportable to me; and so after two or three 'splendid orations,' as my friends termed them, I was satisfied with the puffs of the pamphleteers, and closed my political career. I was, now, then, the wit and the conversationalist. With my fluency of speech and variety of information, these were easy distinctions; and the popularity of a dinner-table, or the approbation of a literary *coterie*, consoled me for the more public and more durable applause I had resigned.

"But even this gratification did not last long. I fell ill; and the friends who gathered round the wit fled from the valetudinarian. This disgusted me, and when I was sufficiently recovered, I again returned to the Continent. But I had a fit of misanthropy and solitude upon me, and so it was not to courts and cities, the scenes of former gaieties, that I repaired; on the contrary, I hired a house by one of the most sequestered of the Swiss lakes, and, avoiding the living, I surrendered myself, without interruption or control, to commune with the dead. I surrounded myself with books, and pored, with a curious and searching eye, into those works which treat particularly upon 'man.' My passions were over, my love of pleasure and society was dried up, and I had now no longer the obstacles which forbid us to be wise; I unlearnt the precepts my manhood had acquired, and in my old age I commenced philosopher;

Religion lent me her aid, and by her holy lamp my studies were conned and my hermitage illumined.

"There are certain characters which, in the world, are evil, and in seclusion are good: Rousseau, whom I knew well, is one of them. These persons are of a morbid sensitiveness, which is perpetually galled by collision with others. In short, they are under the dominion of VANITY; and that vanity, never satisfied and always restless in the various competitions of society, produces 'envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness!' but, in solitude, the good and benevolent dispositions with which our self-love no longer interferes, have room to expand and ripen without being cramped by opposing interests; this will account for many seeming discrepancies in character. There are also some men, in whom old age supplies the place of solitude, and Rousseau's antagonist and mental antipodes, Voltaire, is of this order. The pert, the malignant, the arrogant, the lampooning author in his youth and manhood, has become, in his old age, the mild, the benevolent, and the venerable philosopher. Nothing is more absurd than to receive the characters of great men so implicitly upon the word of a biographer; and nothing can be less surprising than our eternal disputes upon individuals; for no man throughout life is the same being, and each season of our existence contradicts the characteristics of the last.

"And now in my solitude and my old age, a new spirit entered within me; the game in which I had engaged so vehemently was over for me; and I joined to my experience as a player my coolness as a spectator; I no longer struggled with my species, and I began insensibly to love them. I established schools, and founded charities; and, in secret, but active, services to mankind, I employed my exertions and lavished my desires.

"From this amendment I date the peace of mind and elasticity which I now enjoy; and in my later years, the happiness which I pursued in my youth and maturity so hotly, yet so ineffectually, has flown unsolicited to my breast.

"About five years ago I came again to England, with the intention of breathing my last in the country which gave me birth. I retired to my family home; I endeavoured to divert myself in agricultural improvements, and my rental was consumed in speculation. This did not please me long: I sought society—society in Yorkshire! You may imagine the result: I was out of my element; the mere distance from the metropolis, from all genial companionship sickened me with a vague feeling of desertion and solitude: for the first time in my life I felt my age and my celibacy. Once more I returned to town, a complaint attacked my lungs, the physicians recommended the air of this neighbourhood, and I chose the residence I now inhabit. Without being exactly in London I can command its advantages, and obtain society as a recreation, without buying it by restraint. I am not fond of new faces nor any longer covetous of show; my old servant therefore contented me: for the future, I shall, however, satisfy your fears, remove to a safer habitation, and obtain a more numerous guard. It is, at all events, a happiness to me that fate, in casting me here, and exposing me to something of danger, has raised up in you a friend for my old age, and selected from this great universe of strangers, one being to convince my heart that it has not outlived affection. My tale is done; may you profit by its moral!"

When Talbot said that our characters were undergoing a perpetual change he should have made this reservation—the one ruling passion remains to the last; it may be modified, but it never departs; and it is these modifications which do, for the most part, shape out the channels of our change: or, as Helvetius has beautifully expressed it, "we resemble those vessels which the waves still carry towards the south, when the north wind has ceased to blow;" but in our old age, this passion, having little to feed on, becomes sometimes dormant and inert, and then our good qualities rise, as it were from an incubus, and have their sway.

Yet these cases are not common, and Talbot was a remarkable instance, for he was a remarkable man. His mind had not slept while the age advanced, and thus it had swelled as it were from the bondage of its earlier passions and prejudices. But little did he think, in the blindness of self-delusion—though it was so obvious to Clarence, that he could have smiled if he had not rather inclined to weep at the frailties of human nature—little did he think that the vanity which had cost him so much remained "a monarch still," undeposed alike by his philosophy, his religion, or his remorse; and that, debarred by circumstances from all wider and more dangerous field, it still lavished itself upon trifles unworthy of his powers, and puerilities dishonouring his age. Folly is a courtezan whom we ourselves seek, whose favours we solicit at an enormous price; and who, like Lais, finds philosophers at her door, scarcely less frequently than the rest of mankind!

CHAPTER XXI.

Mrs. Trinket. What d'ye buy—what d'ye lack, gentlemen? Gloves, ribbons, and essences—ribbons, gloves, and essences.

—ETHEREGE.

"AND so, my love," said Mr. Copperas, one morning at breakfast, to his wife, his right leg being turned over his left, and his dexter hand conveying to his mouth a huge morsel of buttered cake,—"and so, my love, they say that the old fool is going to leave the jackanapes all his fortune?"

"They do say so, Mr. C.; for my part I am quite out of patience with the art of the young man; I dare say he is no better than he should be; he always had a sharp look, and for aught I know there may be more in that robbery than you or I dreamt of, Mr. Copperas. It was a pity,"

continued Mrs. Copperas, upbraiding her lord with true matrimonial tenderness and justice, for the consequences of his having acted from *her* advice—"it was a pity, Mr. C., that you should have refused to lend him the pistols to go to the old fellow's assistance, for then who knows but——"

"I might have converted them into *pocket* pistols," interrupted Mr. C., "and not have overshot the mark, my dear—ha, ha, ha!"

"Lord, Mr. Copperas, you are always making a joke of everything."

"No, my dear, for once I am making a joke of nothing."

"Well, I declare it's shameful," cried Mr. Copperas, still following up her own indignant meditations, "and after taking such notice of Adolphus, too, and all!"

"Notice, my dear! mere words," returned Mr. Copperas, "mere words, like ventilators, which make a great deal of air, but *never raise the wind;* but don't put yourself in a *stew*, my love, for the doctors say that *copperas in a stew* is poison!"

At this moment Mr. de Warens, throwing open the door, announced Mr. Brown; that gentleman entered, with a sedate, but cheerful air. "Well, Mrs. Copperas, your servant; any table-linen wanted? Mr. Copperas, how do you do? I can give you a hint about the stocks. Master Copperas, you are looking bravely; don't you think he wants some new pinbefores, ma'am? But Mr. Clarence Linden, where is he? Not up yet, I dare say. Ah, the present generation is a generation of sluggards, as his worthy *aunt*, Mrs. Minden, used to say."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Copperas, with a disdainful toss of the head, "I know nothing about the young man. He has left us: a very mysterious piece of business indeed, Mr. Brown; and now I think of it, I can't help saying that we were by no means pleased with your introduction: and, by the by, the chairs you bought for us at the sale were a mere take-in, so slight that Mr. Walruss broke two of them by only sitting down."

"Indeed, ma'am?" said Mr. Brown, with expostulating gravity; "but then Mr. Walruss is so very corpulent. But the young gentleman, what of him?" continued the broker, artfully turning from the point in dispute.

"Lord, Mr. Brown, don't ask me: it was the unluckiest step we ever made to admit him into the bosom of our family; quite a viper, I assure you; absolutely robbed poor Adolphus."

"Lord help us!" said Mr. Brown, with a look which "cast a browner horror" o'er the room, "who would have thought it? and such a pretty young man!"

"Well," said Mr. Copperas, who, occupied in finishing the buttered cake, had hitherto kept silence, "I must be off. Tom—I mean de Warens—have you stopped the coach?"

"Yees, sir."

"And what coach is it?"

"It be the Swallow, sir."

"Oh, very well. And now, Mr. Brown, having swallowed *in the roll*, I will e'en *roll in the Swallow*—Ha, ha, ha!—At any rate," thought Mr. Copperas, as he descended the stairs, "*he* has not heard that before."

"Ha, ha!" gravely chuckled Mr. Brown, "what a very facetious, lively gentleman Mr. Copperas is. But touching this ungrateful young man, Mr. Linden, ma'am?"

"Oh, don't tease me, Mr. Brown, I must see after my domestics: ask Mr. Talbot, the old miser in the next house, the *havarr*, as the French say."

"Well, now," said Mr. Brown, following the good lady down stairs—"how distressing for me—and to say that he was Mrs. Minden's nephew, too!"

But Mr. Brown's curiosity was not so easily satisfied, and finding Mr. de Warens leaning over the "front" gate, and "pursuing with wistful eyes" the departing "Swallow," he stopped, and accosting him, soon possessed himself of the facts that "old Talbot had been robbed and murdered, but that Mr. Linden had brought him to life again;

and that old Talbot had given him a hundred thousand pounds, and adopted him as his son; and that how Mr. Linden was going to be sent to foreign parts, as an ambassador, or governor, or great person; and that how meester and meeses were quite 'cut up' about it."

All these particulars having been duly deposited in the mind of Mr. Brown, they produced an immediate desire to call upon the young gentleman, who, to say nothing of his being so very nearly related to his old customer, Mrs. Minden, was always so very great a favourite with him, Mr. Brown.

Accordingly, as Clarence was musing over his approaching departure, which was now very shortly to take place, he was somewhat startled by the apparition of Mr. Brown—"Charming day, sir—charming day," said the friend of Mrs. Minden—"just called in to congratulate you. I have a few articles, sir, to present you with—quite rarities, I assure you—quite presents, I may say. I picked them up at a sale of the late Lady Waddilove's most valuable effects. They are just the things, sir, for a gentleman going on a foreign mission. A most curious ivory chest, with an Indian padlock, to hold confidential letters—belonged formerly, sir, to the Great Mogul; and a beautiful diamond snuff-box, sir, with a picture of Louis XIV. on it, prodigiously fine, and will look so loyal too: and sir, if you have any old aunts in the country, to send a farewell present to, I have some charming fine cambric, a superb Dresden tea set, and a lovely little 'ape,' stuffed by the late Lady W. herself."

"My good sir," began Clarence.

"Oh, no thanks, sir—none at all—too happy to serve a relation of Mrs. Minden—always proud to keep up family connections. You will be at home to-morrow, sir, at eleven—I will look in—your most humble servant, Mr. Linden." And almost upsetting Talbot, who had just entered, Mr. Brown bowed himself out.

CHAPTER XXII.

We talked with open heart and tongue,
Affectionate and true;
A pair of friends, though I was young
And Matthew seventy-two.—WORDSWORTH.

MEANWHILE the young artist proceeded rapidly with his picture. Devoured by his enthusiasm, and utterly engrossed by the sanguine anticipation of a fame which appeared to him already won, he allowed himself no momentary interval of relaxation; his food was eaten by starts, and without stirring from his easel; his sleep was brief and broken by feverish dreams; he no longer roved with Clarence, when the evening threw her shade over his labours; all air and exercise he utterly relinquished; shut up in his narrow chamber, he passed the hours in a fervid and passionate self-commune, which, even in suspense from his work, riveted his thoughts the closer to its object. All companionship, all intrusion, he bore with irritability and impatience. Even Clarence found himself excluded from the presence of his friend; even his nearest relation, who doated on the very ground which he hallowed with his footstep, was banished from the haunted sanctuary of the painter; from the most placid of human beings, Warner seemed to have grown the most morose.

Want of rest, abstinence from food, the impatience of the strained spirit and jaded nerves, all contributed to waste the health while they excited the genius of the artist. A crimson spot, never before seen there, burnt in the centre of his pale cheek; his eye glowed with a brilliant, but unnatural fire; his features grew sharp and attenuated; his bones worked from his whitening and transparent skin; and the soul and frame, turned from their proper and kindly union, seemed contesting, with fierce struggles, which should obtain the mastery and the triumph.

But neither his new prospects, nor the coldness of his friend, diverted the warm heart of Clarence from meditating how he could most effectually serve the artist before he departed from the country. It was a peculiar object of desire to Warner that the most celebrated painter of the day, who was on terms of intimacy with Talbot, and who with the benevolence of real superiority was known to take a keen interest in the success of more youthful and inexperienced genius;—it was a peculiar object of desire to Warner, that Sir Joshua Reynolds should see his picture before it was completed; and Clarence, aware of this wish, easily obtained from Talbot a promise that it should be effected. That was the least service of his zeal: touched by the earnestness of Linden's frendship, anxious to oblige in any way his preserver, and well pleased himself to be the patron of merit, Talbot readily engaged to obtain for Warner whatever the attention and favour of high rank or literary distinction could bestow. "As for his picture," said Talbot (when, the evening before Clarence's departure, the latter was renewing the subject), "I shall myself become the purchaser, and at a price which will enable our friend to afford leisure and study for the completion of his next attempt; but even at the risk of offending your friendship, and disappointing your expectations, I will frankly tell you, that I think Warner overrates, perhaps not his talents, but his powers; not his ability for doing something great hereafter, but his capacity of doing it at present. In the pride of his heart, he has shown me many of his designs, and I am somewhat of a judge: they want experience, cultivation, taste, and above all, a deeper study of the Italian masters. They all have the defects of a feverish colouring, an ambitious desire of effect, a wavering and imperfect outline, an ostentatious and unnatural strength of light and shadow; they show, it is true, a genius of no ordinary stamp, but one ill regulated, inexperienced, and utterly left to its own suggestions for a model. However, I am glad he wishes for the opinion of one necessarily the

best judge; let him bring the picture here by Thursday; on that day my friend has promised to visit me; and now let us talk of you and your departure."

The intercourse of men of different ages is essentially unequal: it must always partake more or less of advice on one side and deference on the other; and although the easy and unpedantic turn of Talbot's conversation made his remarks rather entertaining than obviously admonitory, yet they were necessarily tinged by his experience, and regulated by his interest in the fortunes of his young friend.

"My dearest Clarence," said he, affectionately, "we are about to bid each other a long farewell. I will not damp your hopes and anticipations by insisting on the little chance there is that you should ever see me again. You are about to enter upon the great world, and have within you the desire and power of success; let me flatter myself that you can profit by my experience. Among the *Colloquia* of Erasmus, there is a very entertaining dialogue between Apicius and a man who, desirous of giving a feast to a very large and miscellaneous party, comes to consult the epicure what will be the best means to give satisfaction to all. Now you shall be this Spudæus (so I think he is called), and I will be Apicius; for the world, after all, is nothing more than a great feast of different strangers, with different tastes, and of different ages, and we must learn to adapt ourselves to their minds, and our temptations to their passions, if we wish to fascinate or even to content them. Let me then call your attention to the hints and maxims which I have in this paper amused myself with drawing up for your instruction. Write to me from time to time, and I will, in replying to your letters, give you the best advice in my power. For the rest, my dear boy, I have only to request that you will be frank, and I, in my turn, will promise that when I cannot assist, I will never reprove. And now, Clarence, as the hour is late, and you leave us early to-morrow, I will no longer detain you. God bless

you and keep you. You are going to enjoy life—I to anticipate death; so that you can find in me little congenial to yourself; but, as the good Pope said to our Protestant countryman, 'Whatever the difference between us, I know well that an old man's blessing is never without its value.' "

As Clarence clasped his benefactor's hand, the tears gushed from his eyes. Is there one being, stubborn as the rock to misfortune, whom kindness does not affect? For my part, kindness seems to me to come with a double grace and tenderness from the old; it seems in them the hoarded and long purified benevolence of years; as if it had survived and conquered the baseness and selfishness of the ordeal it had passed; as if the winds, which had broken the form, had swept in vain across the heart, and the frosts, which had chilled the blood and whitened the thin locks, had possessed no power over the warm tide of the affections. It is the triumph of nature over art; it is the voice of the angel which is yet within us. Nor is this all: the tenderness of age is twice blessed—blessed in its trophies over the obduracy of encrusting and withering years, blessed because it is tinged with the sanctity of the grave; because it tells us that the heart will blossom even upon the precincts of the tomb, and flatters us with the inviolacy and immortality of love.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Cannot I create,
Cannot I form, cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe?—KEATS.

THE next morning Clarence, in his way out of town, directed his carriage (the last and not the least acceptable present from Talbot) to stop at Warner's door. Although it was scarcely sunrise, the aged grandmother of the artist

was stirring and opened the door to the early visitor. Clarence passed her with a brief salutation—hurried up the narrow stairs, and found himself in the artist's chamber. The windows were closed, and the air of the room was confined and hot. A few books, chiefly of history and poetry, stood in confused disorder upon some shelves opposite the window. Upon a table beneath them lay a flute, once the cherished recreation of the young painter, but now long neglected and disused; and, placed exactly opposite to Warner, so that his eyes might open upon his work, was the high-prized and already more than half-finished picture.

Clarence bent over the bed; the cheek of the artist rested upon his arm in an attitude unconsciously picturesque; the other arm was tossed over the coverlet, and Clarence was shocked to see how emaciated it had become. But ever and on the lips of the sleeper moved restlessly, and words, low and inarticulate, broke out. Sometimes he started abruptly, and a bright, but evanescent flush, darted over his faded and hollow cheek; and once the fingers of the thin hand, which lay upon the bed, expanded, and suddenly closed in a firm and almost painful grasp; it was then that for the first time, the words of the artist became distinct.

"Ay, ay," he said, "I have thee, I have thee at last. Long, very long thou hast burnt up my heart like fuel, and mocked me, and laughed at my idle efforts; but now, now, I have thee. Fame, Honour, Immortality, whatever thou art called, I have thee, and thou canst not escape; but it is almost too late!" And, as if wrung by some sudden pain, the sleeper turned heavily round, groaned audibly, and awoke.

"My friend," said Clarence, soothingly, and taking his hand, "I have come to bid you farewell. I am just setting off for the Continent, but I could not leave England without once more seeing you. I have good news, too, for you." And Clarence proceeded to repeat Talbot's wish that Warner should bring the picture to his house on the

following Thursday, that Sir Joshua might inspect it. He added also, in terms the flattery of which his friendship could not resist exaggerating, Talbot's desire to become the purchaser of the picture.

"Yes," said the artist, as his eye glanced delightedly over his labour; "yes, I believe when it is once seen there will be many candidates!"

"No doubt," answered Clarence; "and for that reason you cannot blame Talbot for wishing to forestall all other competitors for the prize:" and then continuing the encouraging nature of the conversation, Clarence enlarged upon the new hopes of his friend, besought him to take time, to spare his health, and not to injure both himself and his performance by over-anxiety and hurry. Clarence concluded by retailing Talbot's assurance that in all cases and circumstances he (Talbot) considered himself pledged to be Warner's supporter and friend.

With something of impatience, mingled with pleasure, the painter listened to all these details; nor was it to Linden's zeal, nor to Talbot's generosity, but rather to the excess of his own merit, that he secretly attributed the brightening prospect offered him.

The indifference which Warner, though of a disposition naturally kind, evinced at parting with a friend who had always taken so strong an interest in his behalf, and whose tears at that moment contrasted forcibly enough with the apathetic coldness of his own farewell, was a remarkable instance how acute vividness on a single point will deaden feeling on all others. Occupied solely and burningly with one intense thought which was to him love, friendship, health, peace, wealth, Warner could not excite feelings, languid and exhausted with many and fiery conflicts, to objects of minor interest, and perhaps he inwardly rejoiced that his musings and his study would henceforth be sacred even from friendship.

Deeply affected, for his nature was exceedingly unselfish, generous, and susceptible, Clarence tore himself away,

placed in the grandmother's hand a considerable portion of the sum he had received from Talbot, hurried into his carriage, and found himself on the high road to fortune, pleasure, distinction, and the Continent.

But while Clarence, despite of every advantage before him, hastened to a court of dissipation and pleasure, with feelings in which regretful affection for those he had left darkened his worldly hopes, and mingled with the sanguine anticipations of youth, Warner, poor, low-born, wasted with sickness, destitute of friends, shut out by his temperament from the pleasures of his age, burned with hopes far less alloyed than those of Clarence, and found in them, for the sacrifice of all else, not only a recompense, but a triumph.

Thursday came. Warner had made one request to Talbot, which had with difficulty been granted: it was that he himself might unseen be the auditor of the great painter's criticisms, and that Sir Joshua should be perfectly unaware of his presence. It had been granted with difficulty, because Talbot wished to spare Warner the pain of hearing remarks which he felt would be likely to fall far short of the sanguine self-elation of the young artist; and it *had* been granted because Talbot imagined that, even should this be the case, the pain would be more than counterbalanced by the salutary effect it might produce. Alas! vanity calculates but poorly upon the vanity of others! What a virtue we should distil from frailty; what a world of pain we should save our brethren, if we would suffer our own weakness to be the measure of theirs!

Thursday came; the painting was placed by the artist's own hand in the most favourable light; a curtain, hung behind it, served as a screen for Warner, who, retiring to his hiding-place, surrendered his heart to delicious forebodings of the critic's wonder, and golden anticipations of the future destiny of his darling work. Not a fear dashed the full and smooth cup of his self-enjoyment. He had lain awake the whole of the night, in restless and joyous im-

patience for the morrow. At daybreak he had started from his bed, he had unclosed his shutters, he had hung over his picture with a fondness greater, if possible, than he had ever known before; like a mother, he felt as if his own partiality was but a part of a universal tribute; and, as his aged relative turning her dim eyes to the painting, and, in her innocent idolatry, rather of the artist than his work, praised, and expatiated, and foretold, his heart whispered, "If it wring this worship from ignorance, what will be the homage of science?"

He who first laid down the now hackneyed maxim that diffidence is the companion of genius, knew very little of the workings of the human heart. True, there may have been a few such instances, and it is probable that in this maxim, as in most, the exception made the rule. But what could ever reconcile genius to its sufferings, its sacrifices, its fevered inquietudes, the intense labour which can alone produce what the shallow world deems the giant offspring of a momentary inspiration; what could ever reconcile it to these but the haughty and unquenchable consciousness of internal power; the hope which has the fulness of certainty that in proportion to the toil is the reward; the sanguine and impetuous anticipation of glory, which bursts the boundaries of time and space, and ranges immortality with a prophet's rapture? Rob Genius of its confidence, of its lofty self-esteem, and you clip the wings of the eagle: you domesticate, it is true, the wanderer you could not hitherto comprehend in the narrow bounds of your household affections; you abase and tame it more to the level of your ordinary judgments, but you take from it the power to soar; the hardihood which was content to brave the thunder-cloud and build its eyrie on the rock, for the proud triumph of rising above its kind, and contemplating with a nearer eye the majesty of heaven.

But if something of presumption is a part of the very essence of genius, in Warner it was doubly natural, for he was still in the heat and flush of a design, the defects of

which he had not yet had the leisure to examine; and his talents, self-taught and self-modelled, had never received either the excitement of emulation or the chill of discouragement from the study of the masterpieces of his art.

The painter had not been long alone in his concealment before he heard steps; his heart beat violently, the door opened, and he saw, through a small hole which he had purposely made in the curtain, a man with a benevolent and prepossessing countenance, whom he instantly recognised as Sir Joshua Reynolds, enter the room, accompanied by Talbot. They walked up to the picture; the painter examined it closely, and in perfect silence. "Silence," thought Warner, "is the best homage of admiration;" but he trembled with impatience to hear the admiration confirmed by words,—those words came too soon.

"It is the work of a clever man, certainly," said Sir Joshua; "*but*" (terrible monosyllable) "of one utterly unskilled in the grand principles of his art: look here, and here, and, here, for instance;" and the critic, perfectly unconscious of the torture he inflicted, proceeded to point out the errors of the work. Oh! the agony, the withering agony of that moment to the ambitious Artist! In vain he endeavoured to bear up against the judgment—in vain he endeavoured to persuade himself that it was the voice of envy which in those cold, measured, *defining* accents, fell like drops of poison upon his heart. He felt at once, and as if by a magical inspiration, the truth of the verdict; the scales of self-delusion fell from his eyes; by a hideous mockery, a kind of terrible pantomime, his goddess seemed at a word, a breath, transformed into a monster: life, which had been so lately concentrated into a single hope, seemed now, at once and forever, cramped, curdled, blistered into a single disappointment.

"But," said Talbot, who had in vain attempted to arrest the criticisms of the painter (who, very deaf at all times, was, at that time in particular, engrossed by the self-satisfaction always enjoyed by one expatiating on his favourite

topic),—"but," said Talbot, in a louder voice, "you own there is great genius in the design?"

"Certainly, there is genius," replied Sir Joshua, in a tone of calm and complacent good-nature; "but what is genius without culture? You say the artist is young, very young; let him take time—I do not say let him attempt a humbler walk—let him persevere in the lofty one he has chosen, but let him first retrace every step he has taken; let him devote days, months, years, to the most diligent study of the immortal masters of the divine art, before he attempts (to exhibit, at least) another historical picture. He has mistaken altogether the nature of invention: a fine invention is nothing more than a fine deviation from, or enlargement on, a fine model: imitation, if noble and general, insures the best hope of originality. Above all, let your young friend, if he can afford it, visit Italy."

"He *shall* afford it," said Talbot, kindly, "for he shall have whatever advantages I can procure him; but you see the picture is only half-completed—he could alter it!"

"*He had better burn it!*" replied the painter, with a gentle smile.

And Talbot, in benevolent despair, hurried his visitor out of the room. He soon returned to seek and console the artist, but the artist was gone; the despised, the fatal picture, the blessing and curse of so many anxious and wasted hours, had vanished also with its creator.

CHAPTER XXIV.

> What is this soul, then? Whence
> Came it?—It does not seem my own, and I
> Have no self-passion or identity!
> Some fearful end must be—
>
> * * * * *
>
> There never lived a mortal man, who bent
> His appetite beyond his natural sphere,
> But starved and died.—KEATS'S *Endymion.*

ON entering his home, Warner pushed aside, for the first time in his life with disrespect, his aged and kindly relation, who, as if in mockery of the unfortunate artist, stood prepared to welcome and congratulate his return. Bearing his picture in his arms, he rushed up stairs, hurried into his room, and locked the door. Hastily he tore aside the cloth which had been drawn over the picture; hastily and tremblingly he placed it upon the frame accustomed to support it, and then, with a long, long, eager, searching, scrutinizing glance, he surveyed the once beloved mistress of his worship. Presumption, vanity, exaggerated self-esteem, are, in their punishment, supposed to excite ludicrous, not sympathetic, emotion; but there is an *excess* of feeling, produced by whatever cause it may be, into which, in spite of ourselves, we are forced to enter. Even fear, the most contemptible of the passions, becomes tragic the moment it becomes an agony.

"Well, well!" said Warner at last, speaking very slowly, "it is over—it was a pleasant dream—but it is over—I ought to be thankful for the lesson." Then suddenly changing his mood and tone, he repeated, "Thankful! for what? that I am a wretch—a wretch more utterly hopeless, and miserable, and abandoned, than a man who freights with all his wealth, his children, his wife, the hoarded treasures and blessings of an existence, one ship, one frail, worthless ship, and, standing himself on the shore, sees

it suddenly go down! Oh, was I not a fool—a right noble fool—a vain fool—an arrogant fool—a very essence and concentration of all things that make a fool, to believe such delicious marvels of myself! What, man!" (here his eye saw in the opposite glass his features, livid and haggard with disease, and the exhausting feelings which preyed within him)—"what, man! would nothing serve thee but to be a genius—*thee*, whom Nature stamped with her curse! Dwarf-like and distorted, mean in stature and in lineament, thou wert, indeed, a glorious being to perpetuate grace and beauty, the majesties and dreams of art! Fame for thee, indeed—ha—ha! Glory—ha—ha! a place with Titian, Correggio, Raphael—ha—ha—ha! O, thrice-modest, thrice-reasonable fool! But this vile daub; this disfigurement of canvas; this loathed and wretched monument of disgrace; this notable candidate for—ha—ha—immortality!—this I have, at least, in my power." And seizing the picture, he dashed it to the ground, and trampled it with his feet upon the dusty boards, till the moist colours presented nothing but one confused and dingy stain.

This sight seemed to recall him for a moment. He paused, lifted up the picture once more, and placed it on the table. "But," he muttered, "might not this critic be envious? am I sure that he judged rightly—fairly? The greatest masters have looked askant and jealous at their pupil's works. And then how slow, how cold, how damned cold, how indifferently he spoke; why, the very art should have warmed him more. Could he have——No, no, no: it *was* true, it was! I felt the conviction thrill through me like a searing iron. Burn it—did he say—ay—burn it—it shall be done this instant."

And, hastening to the door, he undid the bolt. He staggered back as he beheld his old and nearest surviving relative, the mother of his father, seated upon the ground beside the door, terrified by the exclamations she did not dare to interrupt. She rose slowly, and with difficulty, as

she saw him; and, throwing around him the withered arms which had nursed his infancy, exclaimed, "My child! my poor—poor child! what has come to you of late? you, who were so gentle, so mild, so quiet—you are no longer the same—and oh, my son, how ill you look: your father looked so just before he died!"

"Ill!" said he, with a sort of fearful gaiety, "ill—no—I never was so well—I have been in a dream till now—but I have woke at last. Why, it is true that I have been silent and shy, but I will be so no more. I will laugh, and talk, and walk, and make love, and drink wine, and be all that other men are. Oh, we will be so merry. But stay here, while I fetch a light."

"A light, my child, for what?"

"For a funeral!" shouted Warner, and rushing past her, he descended the stairs, and returned almost in an instant with a light.

Alarmed and terrified, the poor old woman had remained motionless, and weeping violently. Her tears Warner did not seem to notice; he pushed her gently into the room, and began deliberately, and without uttering a syllable, to cut the picture into shreds.

"What are you about, my child?" cried the old woman; "you are mad; it is your beautiful picture that you are destroying!"

Warner did not reply, but, going to the hearth, piled together, with nice and scrupulous care, several pieces of paper, and stick, and matches, into a sort of pyre; then, placing the shreds of the picture upon it, he applied the light, and the whole was instantly in a blaze.

"Look, look!" cried he, in an hysterical tone, "how it burns, and crackles, and blazes! What master ever equalled it now?—no fault now in those colours—no false tints in that light and shade! See how that flame darts up and soars! —that flame is my spirit! Look—is it not restless?—does it not aspire bravely?—why, all its brother flames are grovellers to it!—and now—why don't you look!—it falters—

fades—droops—and—ha—ha—ha! poor idler, the fuel is consumed—and—it is darkness!"

As Warner uttered these words his eyes reeled; the room swam before him; the excitement of his feeble frame had reached its highest pitch; the disease of many weeks had attained its crisis; and, tottering back a few paces, he fell upon the floor, the victim of a delirious and raging fever.

But it was not thus that the young artist was to die. He was reserved for a death, that, like his real nature, had in it more of gentleness and poetry. He recovered, by slow degrees, and his mind, almost in spite of himself, returned to that profession from which it was impossible to divert the thoughts and musings of many years. Not that he resumed the pencil and the easel; on the contrary, he could not endure them in his sight: they appeared, to a mind festered and sore, like a memorial and monument of shame. But he nursed within him a strong and ardent desire to become a pilgrim to that beautiful land of which he had so often dreamed, and which the innocent destroyer of his peace had pointed out as the theatre of inspiration and the nursery of future fame.

The physicians who, at Talbot's instigation, attended him, looked at his hectic cheek and consumptive frame, and readily flattered his desire: and Talbot, no less interested in Warner's behalf on his own account, than bound by his promise to Clarence, generously extended to the artist that bounty which is the most precious prerogative of the rich. Notwithstanding her extreme age, his grandmother insisted upon attending him: there is in the heart of woman so deep a well of love, that no age can freeze it. They made the voyage: they reached the shore of the myrtle and the vine, and entered the Imperial City. The air of Rome seemed at first to operate favourably upon the health of the English artist. His strength appeared to increase, his spirit to expand; and though he had relapsed into more than his original silence and reserve, he resumed, with apparent energy,

the labours of the easel: so that they who looked no deeper than the surface might have imagined the scar healed, and the real foundation of future excellence begun.

But while Warner most humbled himself before the gods of the pictured world; while the true principles of the mighty art opened in their fullest glory on his soul; precisely at this very moment shame and despondency were most bitter at his heart: and while the enthusiasm of the painter kindled, the ambition of the man despaired. But still he went on, transfusing into his canvas the grandeur and simplicity of the Italian school; still, though he felt palpably within him the creeping advance of the deadliest and surest enemy to fame, he pursued, with an unwearied ardour, the mechanical completion of his task; still, the morning found him bending before the easel, and the night brought to his solitary couch meditation rather than sleep. The fire, the irritability which he had evinced before his illness had vanished, and the original sweetness of his temper had returned; he uttered no complaint, he dwelt upon no anticipation of success, hope and regret seemed equally dead within him; and it was only when he caught the fond, glad eyes of his aged attendant that his own filled with tears, or that the serenity of his brow darkened into sadness.

This went on for some months till one evening they found the painter by his window, seated opposite to an unfinished picture. The pencil was still in his hand; the quiet of settled thought was still upon his countenance; the soft breeze of a southern twilight waved the hair livingly from his forehead; the earliest star of a southern sky lent to his cheek something of that subdued lustre which, when touched by enthusiasm, it had been accustomed to wear; but these were only the mockeries of life: life itself was no more! He had died, reconciled, perhaps, to the loss of fame—in discovering that Art is to be loved for itself—and not for the rewards it may bestow upon the Artist.

There are two tombs close to each other in the strangers'

burialplace at Rome: they cover those for whom life, unequally long, terminated in the same month. The one is of a woman, bowed with the burthen of many years: the other darkens over the dust of the young artist.

CHAPTER XXV.

> Think upon my grief,
> And on the justice of my flying hence,
> To keep me from a most unholy match.—SHAKSPEARE.

"BUT are you quite sure," said General St. Leger, "are you quite sure that this girl still permits Mordaunt's addresses?"

"Sure!" cried Miss Diana St. Leger, "sure, General! I saw it with my own eyes. They were standing together in the copse, when I, who had long had my suspicions, crept up, and saw them; and Mr. Mordaunt held her hand, and kissed it every moment. Shocking and indecorous!"

"I hate that man! as proud as Lucifer," growled the General. "Shall we lock her up, or starve her?"

"No, General, something better than that."

"What, my love? flog her?"

"She's too old for that, brother; we'll marry her."

"Marry her!"

"Yes, to Mr. Glumford; you know that he has asked her several times."

"But she cannot bear him."

"We'll make her bear him, General St. Leger."

"But if she marries, I shall have nobody to nurse me when I have the gout."

"Yes, brother: I know of a nice little girl, Martha Richardson, your second cousin's youngest daughter; you know he has fourteen children, and you may have them all, one after another, if you like."

"Very true, Diana—let the jade marry Mr. Glumford."

"She shall," said the sister; "and I'll go about it this very moment; meantime I'll take care that she does not see her lover any more."

About three weeks after this conversation, Mordaunt, who had in vain endeavoured to see Isabel, who had not even heard from her, whose letters had been returned to him unopened, and who, consequently, was in despair, received the following note:

"This is the first time I have been able to write to you, at least to get my letter conveyed: it is a strange messenger that I have employed, but I happened formerly to make his acquaintance, and accidentally seeing him to-day, the extremity of the case induced me to give him a commission which I could trust to no one else. Algernon, are not the above sentences written with admirable calmness? are they not very explanatory, very consistent, very cool? and yet do you know that I firmly believe I am going mad? My brain turns round and round, and my hand burns so that I almost think that, like our old nurse's stories of the fiend, it will scorch the paper as I write. And I see strange faces in my sleep, and in my waking, all mocking at me, and they torture and haunt me; and when I look at those faces I see no human relenting, no! though I weep and throw myself on my knees, and implore them to save me. Algernon, my only hope is in you. You know that I have always hitherto refused to ruin you; and even now, though I implore you to deliver me, I will not be so selfish as—as—I know not what I write, but if I cannot be your wife—I will not be his! No! if they drag me to church, it shall be to my grave, not my bridal.

"Isabel St. Leger."

When Mordaunt had read this letter, which, in spite of its incoherence, his fears readily explained, he rose hastily;

his eyes rested upon a sober-looking man, clad in brown. The proud love no spectators to their emotions.

"Who are you, sir?" said Algernon, quickly.

"Morris Brown," replied the stranger, coolly and civilly. "Brought that letter to you, sir; shall be very happy to serve you with anything else; just fitted out a young gentleman as ambassador, a nephew to Mrs. Minden—very old friend of mine. Beautiful slabs you have here, sir, but they want a few knick-knacks; shall be most happy to supply you; got a lovely little ape, sir, stuffed by the late Lady Waddilove; it would look charming with this old-fashioned carving: give the room quite the air of a museum."

"And so," said Mordaunt, for whose ear the eloquence of Mr. Brown contained only one sentence, "and so you brought this note, and will take back my answer?"

"Yes, sir; anything to keep up family connections—I knew a Lady Morden very well—very well indeed, sir—a relation of yours, I presume, by the similarity of the name; made her very valuable presents; shall be most happy to do the same to you, when you are married, sir. You will refurnish the house, I suppose? Let me see—fine proportions to this room, sir—about thirty-six feet by twenty-eight; I'll do the thing twenty per cent. cheaper than the trade; and touching the lovely little——"

"Here," interrupted Mordaunt, "you will take back this note, and be sure that Miss Isabel St. Leger has it as soon as possible; oblige me by accepting this trifle—a trifle indeed compared with my gratitude, if this note reaches its destination safely."

"I am sure," said Mr. Brown, looking with surprise at the gift, which he held with no unwilling hand, "I am sure, sir, that you are very generous, and strongly remind me of your relation, Lady Morden; and if you would like the lovely little ape as a present—I mean *really* a present—you shall have it, Mr. Mordaunt."

But Mr. Mordaunt had left the room, and the sober Morris, looking round, and cooling in his generosity, said to

himself, "It is well he did not hear me, however; but I hope he will marry the nice young lady, for I love doing a kindness. This house must be refurnished—no lady will like these old-fashioned chairs."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Squire and fool are the same thing here.—FARQUHAR.

In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And, with an unthrift love, did run from Venice.—SHAKSPEARE.

THE persecutions which Isabel had undergone had indeed preyed upon her reason as well as her health; and, in her brief intervals of respite from the rage of the uncle, the insults of the aunt, and, worse than all, the addresses of the intended bridegroom her mind, shocked and unhinged, reverted with such intensity to the sufferings she endured as to give her musings the character of insanity. It was in one of these moments that she had written to Mordaunt; and had the contest continued much longer the reason of the unfortunate and persecuted girl would have totally deserted her.

She was a person of acute, and even poignant, sensibilities, and these the imperfect nature of her education had but little served to guide or to correct; but as her habits were pure and good, the impulses which spring from habit were also sinless and exalted, and, if they erred, "they leant on virtue's side," and partook rather of a romantic and excessive generosity than of the weakness of *womanhood* or the selfishness of passion. All the misery and debasement of her equivocal and dependent situation had not been able to drive her into compliance with Mordaunt's passionate and urgent prayers; and her heart was proof even to the eloquence of love, when that eloquence pointed towards

the worldly injury and depreciation of her lover: but this new persecution was utterly unforeseen in its nature and intolerable from its cause. To marry another—to be torn for ever from one in whom her whole heart was wrapped—to be forced not only to forego his love, but to feel that the very thought of him was a crime; all this, backed by the vehement and galling insults of her relations, and the sullen and unmoved meanness of her intended bridegroom, who answered her candour and confession with a stubborn indifference and renewed overtures, made a load of evil which could neither be borne with resignation nor contemplated with patience.

She was sitting, after she had sent her letter, with her two relations, for they seldom trusted her out of their sight, when Mr. Glumford was announced. Now, Mr. George Glumford was a country gentleman of what might be termed a third-rate family in the county; he possessed about twelve hundred a year to say nothing of the odd pounds, shillings, and pence, which, however, did not meet with such contempt in his memory or estimation; was of a race which could date as far back as Charles the Second; had been educated at a country school with sixty others, chiefly inferior to himself in rank; and had received the last finish at a very small hall at Oxford. In addition to these advantages, he had been indebted to nature for a person five feet eight inches high, and stout in proportion; for hair very short, very straight, and of a red hue, which even through powder cast out a yellow glow; for an obstinate dogged sort of nose, beginning in snub, and ending in bottle; for cold, small, grey eyes, a very small mouth, pinched up and avaricious; and very large, very freckled, yet rather white hands, the nails of which were punctiliously cut into a point every other day, with a pair of scissors which Mr. Glumford often boasted had been in his possession since his eighth year; viz. for about thirty-two legitimate revolutions of the sun.

He was one of those persons who are equally close and

adventurous; who loved the *éclat* of a little speculation, but take exceeding good care that it should be, in their own graceful phrase, "on the safe side of the hedge." In pursuance of this characteristic of mind, he had resolved to fall in love with Miss Isabel St. Leger; for she being very dependent, he could boast to her of his disinterestedness, and hope that she would be economical through a principle of gratitude; and being the nearest relation to the opulent General St. Leger, and his unmarried sister, there seemed to be every rational probability of her inheriting the bulk of their fortunes. Upon these hints of prudence spake Mr. George Glumford.

Now, when Isabel, partly in her ingenuous frankness, partly from the passionate promptings of her despair, revealed to him her attachment to another, and her resolution never, with her own consent, to become his, it seemed to the slow, but not uncalculating, mind of Mr. Glumford not by any means desirable that he should forego his present intentions, but by all means desirable that he should make this reluctance of Isabel's an excuse for sounding the intentions and increasing the posthumous liberality of the East Indian and his sister.

"The girl is of my nearest blood," said the major-general, "and if I don't leave my fortune to her, who the devil should I leave it to, sir?" and so saying, the speaker, who was in a fell paroxysm of the gout, looked so fiercely at the hinting wooer, that Mr. George Glumford, who was no Achilles, was somewhat frightened, and thought it expedient to hint no more.

"My brother," said Miss Diana, "is so odd; but he is the most generous of men: besides, the girl has claims upon him."

Upon these speeches Mr. Glumford thought himself secure; and inly resolving to punish the fool for her sulkiness and bad taste, as soon as he lawfully could, he continued his daily visits, and told his sporting acquaintance that his time was coming.

Revenons à nos moutons. Forgive this preliminary detail, and let us return to Mr. Glumford himself, whom we left at the door, pulling and fumbling at the glove which covered his right hand, in order to present the naked palm to Miss Diana St. Leger. After this act was performed, he approached Isabel, and drawing his chair near to her, proceeded to converse with her as the Ogre did with Puss in Boots; viz. "as civilly as an Ogre could do."

This penance had not proceeded far before the door was again opened, and Mr. Morris Brown presented himself to the conclave.

"Your servant, General; your servant, Madam. I took the liberty of coming back again, Madam, because I forgot to show you some very fine silks, the most extraordinary bargain in the world—quite presents; and I have a *Sèvres* bowl here, a superb article, from the cabinet of the late Lady Waddilove."

Now Mr. Brown was a very old acquaintance of Miss Diana St. Leger, for there is a certain class of old maids with whom our fair readers are no doubt acquainted, who join to a great love of expense a great love of bargains, and who never purchase at the regular place if they can find any *irregular* vendor. They are great friends of Jews and itinerants, hand-in-glove with smugglers, Ladies Bountiful to pedlars, are diligent readers of puffs and advertisements, and eternal haunters of sales and auctions. Of this class was Miss Diana a most prominent individual: judge, then, how acceptable to her was the acquaintance of Mr. Brown. That indefatigable merchant of miscellanies had, indeed, at a time when brokers were perhaps rather more rare and respectable than now, a numerous country acquaintance, and thrice a year he performed a sort of circuit to all his customers and connections; hence his visit to St. Leger House, and hence Isabel's opportunity of conveying her epistle.

"Pray," said Mr. Glumford, who had heard much of Mr. Brown's 'presents' from Miss Diana—"pray don't you furnish rooms, and *things of that sort?*"

"Certainly, sir, certainly, in the best manner possible."

"Oh! very well, I shall want some rooms furnished soon; a bedroom, and a dressing-room; and things of that sort, you know. And so—perhaps you may have something in your box that will suit me, gloves, or handkerchiefs, or shirts, or things of that sort."

"Yes, sir, everything, I sell everything," said Mr. Brown, opening his box.—"I beg pardon, Miss Isabel, I have dropped my handkerchief by your chair; allow me to stoop," and Mr. Brown, stooping under the table, managed to effect his purpose; unseen by the rest, a note was slipped into Isabel's hand, and under pretence of stooping too, she managed to secure the treasure. Love need well be honest if, even when it is most true, it leads us into so much that is false!

Mr. Brown's box was now unfolded before the eyes of the crafty Mr. Glumford, who, having selected three pair of gloves, offered the exact half of the sum demanded.

Mr. Brown lifted up his hands and eyes.

"You see," said the imperturbable Glumford, "that if you let me have them for that, and they last me well, and don't come unsewn, and stand cleaning, you'll have my custom in furnishing the house, and rooms, and—things of that sort."

Struck with the grandeur of this opening, Mr. Brown yielded, and the gloves were bought.

"The fool!" thought the noble George, laughing in his sleeve, "as if I should ever furnish the house from his box!"

Strange that some men should be proud of being mean!

The moment Isabel escaped to dress for dinner, she opened her lover's note. It was as follows:—

"Be in *the* room, your retreat, at nine this evening. Let the window be left unclosed. Precisely at that hour I will be with you. I shall have everything in readiness for your flight. Be sure, dearest Isabel, that nothing prevents your

meeting me there, even if all your house follow or attend you. I will bear you from all. Oh, Isabel! in spite of the mystery and wretchedness of your letter, I feel too happy, too blest at the thought that our fates will be at length united, and that the union is at hand. Remember nine.

"A. M."

Love is a feeling which has so little to do with the world, a passion so little regulated by the known laws of our more steady and settled emotions that the thoughts which it produces are always more or less connected with exaggeration and romance. To the secret spirit of enterprise which, however chilled by his pursuits and habits, still burned within Mordaunt's breast, there was a wild pleasure in the thought of bearing off his mistress and his bride from the very home and hold of her false friends and real foes; while in the contradictions of the same passion, Isabel, so far from exulting at her approaching escape, trembled at her danger, and blushed for her temerity; and the fear and the modesty of woman almost triumphed over her brief energy and fluctuating resolve.

CHAPTER XXVII.

We haste—the chosen and the lovely bringing;
Love still goes with her from her place of birth;
Deep, silent joy, within her soul is springing,
Though in her glance the light no more is mirth.

MRS. HEMANS.

"DAMN it!" said the general.

"The vile creature!" cried Miss Diana.

"I don't understand things of that sort," ejaculated the bewildered Mr. Glumford.

"She has certainly gone," said the valiant general.

"Certainly!" grunted Miss Diana.

"Gone!" echoed the bridegroom *not* to be.

And she was gone! never did more loving and tender heart forsake all, and cling to a more loyal and generous nature. The skies were darkened with clouds,

And the dim stars rushed through them rare and fast;

and the winds wailed with a loud and ominous voice; and the moon came forth, with a faint and sickly smile, from her chamber in the midst, and then shrank back, and was seen no more; but neither omen nor fear was upon Mordaunt's breast, as it swelled beneath the dark locks of Isabel, which were pressed against it.

As Faith clings the more to the cross of life, while the wastes deepen around her steps, and the adders creep forth upon her path, so love clasps that which is its hope and comfort the closer, for the desert which encompasses, and the dangers which harass its way.

They had fled to London, and Isabel had been placed with a very distant, and very poor, though very high-born relative of Algernon's, till the necessary preliminaries could be passed, and the final bond knit. Yet still the generous Isabel would have refused—despite the injury to her own fame, to have ratified a union which filled her with gloomy presentiments for Mordaunt's fate; and still Mordaunt by little and little broke down her tender scruples and self-immolating resolves, and ceased not his eloquence and his suit till the day of his nuptials was set and come.

The morning was bright and clear—the autumn was drawing towards its close, and seemed willing to leave its last remembrance tinged with the warmth and softness of its parent summer, rather than with the stern gloom and severity of its chilling successor.

And they stood beside the altar, and their vows were exchanged. A slight tremor came over Algernon's frame, a slight shade darkened his countenance; for even in that bridal hour an icy and thrilling foreboding curdled to his heart; it passed—the ceremony was over, and Mordaunt

bore his blushing and weeping bride from the church. His carriage was in attendance; for, not knowing how long the home of his ancestors might be his, he was impatient to return to it. The old Countess D'Arcy, Mordaunt's relation, with whom Isabel had been staying, called them back to bless them; for, even through the coldness of old age, she was touched by the singularity of their love, and affected by their nobleness of heart. She laid her wan and shrivelled hand upon each, as she bade them farewell, and each shrank back involuntarily, for the cold and light touch seemed like the fingers of the dead.

Fearful, indeed, is the vicinity of death and life—the bridal chamber and the charnel. That night the old woman died. It appeared as if Fate had set its seal upon the union it had so long forbidden, and had woven a dark thread even in the marriage-bond. At least, it tore from two hearts, over which the cloud and the blast lay couched in a "grim repose," the last shelter, which, however frail and distant, seemed left to them upon the inhospitable earth.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

> Live while ye may, yet happy pair: enjoy
> Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed.—MILTON.

THE autumn and the winter passed away; Mordaunt's relation continued implacable. Algernon grieved for this, independent of worldly circumstances; for, though he had seldom seen that relation, yet he loved him for former kindness—rather promised, to be sure, than yet shown—with a natural warmth of an affection which has but few objects. However, the old gentleman (a very short, very fat person—very short, and very fat people, when they *are* surly, are the devil and all; for the humours of their mind, like those of their body, have something corrupt and unpurgeable in them)—wrote him one bluff, contemptuous

letter, in a witty strain—for he was a bit of a humourist—disowned his connection, and very shortly afterwards died, and left all his fortune to the very Mr. Vavasour who was at law with Mordaunt, and for whom he had always openly expressed the strongest personal dislike—spite to one relation is a marvellous tie to another. Meanwhile the law-suit went on less slowly than law-suits usually do, and the final decision was very speedily to be given.

We said the autumn and the winter were gone; and it was in one of those latter days in March, when, like a hoyden girl subsiding into dawning womanhood, the rude weather mellows into a softer and tenderer month, that, by the side of a stream, overshadowed by many a brake and tree, sat two persons.

"I know not, dearest Algernon," said one, who was a female, "if this is not almost the sweetest month in the year, because it is the month of *Hope*."

"Ay, Isabel; and they did it wrong who called it harsh, and dedicated it to Mars. I exult even in the fresh winds which hardier frames than mine shrink from, and I love feeling their wild breath fan my cheek as I ride against it. I remember," continued Algernon, musingly, "that on this very day three years ago, I was travelling through Germany, alone and on horseback, and I paused not far from Ens, on the banks of the Danube; the waters of the river were disturbed and fierce, and the winds came loud and angry against my face, dashing the spray of the waves upon me, and filling my spirit with a buoyant and glad delight; and at that time I had been indulging old dreams of poetry, and had laid my philosophy aside; and in the inspiration of the moment, I lifted up my hand towards the quarter whence the winds came, and questioned them audibly of their birthplace, and their bourne; and, as the enthusiasm increased, I compared them to our human life, which a moment is, and then is *not:* and, proceeding from folly to folly, I asked them, as if they were the interpreters of heaven, for a type and sign of my future lot."

"And what said they?" inquired Isabel, smiling, yet smiling timidly.

"They answered not," replied Mordaunt; but a voice within me seemed to say—'Look above!' and I raised my eyes,—but I did not see *thee*, love—so the Book of Fate lied."

"Nay, Algernon, what *did* you see?" asked Isabel, more earnestly than the question deserved.

"I saw a thin cloud, alone amidst many dense and dark ones scattered around; and as I gazed it seemed to take the likeness of a funeral procession—coffin, bearers, priests, all—as clear in the cloud as I have seen them on the earth: and I shuddered as I saw; but the winds blew the vapour onwards, and it mingled with the broader masses of cloud; and then, Isabel, the sun shone forth for a moment, and I mistook, love, when I said you were not there, for *that* sun was you; but suddenly the winds ceased, and the rain came on fast and heavy: so my romance cooled, and my fever slacked—I thought on the inn at Ens, and the blessings of a wood fire, which is lighted in a moment, and I spurred on my horse accordingly."

"It is very strange," said Isabel.

"What, love?" whispered Algernon, kissing her cheek.

"Nothing, dearest, nothing."

At that instant, the deer, which lay waving their lordly antlers to and fro beneath the avenue which sloped upward from the stream to the house, rose hurriedly and in confusion, and stood gazing, with watchful eyes, upon a man advancing towards the pair.

It was one of the servants with a letter. Isabel saw a faint change (which none else could have seen) in Mordaunt's countenance, as he recognised the writing and broke the seal. When he had read the letter, his eyes fell upon the ground, and then, with a slight start, he lifted them up, and gazed long and eagerly around. Wistfully did he drink, as it were, into his heart the beautiful and expanded scene which lay stretched on either side; the noble avenue

which his forefathers had planted as a shelter to their sons, and which now, in its majestic growth and its waving boughs seemed to say, "Lo! ye are repaid!" and the never silent and silver stream, by which his boyhood had sat for hours, lulled by its music, and inhaling the fragrance of the reed and wild flower that decoyed the bee to its glossy banks; and the deer, to whose melancholy *belling* he had listened so often in the grey twilight with a rapt and dreaming ear; and the green fern waving on the gentle hill, from whose shade his young feet had startled the hare and the infant fawn; and far and faintly gleaming through the thick trees, which clasped it as with a girdle, the old Hall, so associated with vague hopes and musing dreams, and the dim legends of gone time, and the lofty prejudices of ancestral pride—all seemed to sink within him, as he gazed, like the last looks of departing friends; and when Isabel, who had not dared to break a silence which partook so strongly of gloom, at length laid her hand upon his arm, and lifted her dark, deep, tender eyes to his, he said, as he drew her towards him, and a faint and sickly smile played upon his lips—

"It is past, Isabel: henceforth we have no wealth but in each other. The cause has been decided—and—and—we are beggars!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

We expose our life to a quotidian ague of frigid impertinences, which would make a wise man tremble to think of.—COWLEY.

WE must suppose a lapse of four years from the date of those events which concluded the last chapter; and, to recompense the reader, who, I know, has a little *penchant* for "High Life," even in the last century, for having hitherto shown him human beings in a state of society not wholly artificial, I beg him to picture to himself a large

room, brilliantly illuminated, and crowded "with the magnates of the land." Here, some in saltatory motion, some in sedentary rest, are dispersed various groups of young ladies and attendant swains, talking upon the subject of Lord Rochester's celebrated poem, viz.:—"*Nothing!*"—and, lounging around the doors, meditating, probably, upon the same subject stand those unhappy victims of dancing daughters, denominated "Papas."

The music has ceased—the dancers have broken up, and there is a general but gentle sweep towards the refreshment-room. In the crowd—having just entered—there glided a young man of an air more distinguished and somewhat more joyous than the rest.

"How do you do, Mr. Linden?" said a tall and (though somewhat *passée*) very handsome woman, blazing with diamonds; "are you just come?"

And here, by the way, I cannot resist pausing to observe, that a friend of mine meditating a novel, submitted a part of the MS. to a friendly publisher. "Sir," said the bookseller, "your book is very clever, but it wants dialogue."

"Dialogue!" cried my friend—"you mistake—it is all dialogue."

"Ay, sir, but not what *we* call dialogue; we want a little conversation in fashionable life—a little elegant chit-chat or so: and, as you must have seen so much of the *beau monde*, you could do it to the life: we must have something light, and witty, and entertaining."

"Light, witty, and entertaining!" said our poor friend; "and how the deuce then is it to be like conversation in 'fashionable life'? When the very best conversation one can get is so insufferably dull, how do you think people will be amused by reading a copy of the very worst?"

"They *are* amused, sir," said the publisher; "and works of this kind *sell!*"

"I am convinced," said my friend; for he was a man of a placid temper: he took the hint, and his book did sell!

Now this anecdote rushed into my mind after the pen-

ning of the little address of the lady in diamonds—"How do you do, Mr. Linden? Are you just come?"—and it received an additional weight from my utter inability to put into the mouth of Mr. Linden—notwithstanding my desire of representing him in the most brilliant colours—any more happy and eloquent answer than—"Only this instant!"

However, as this is in the true spirit of elegant dialogue, I trust my readers find it as light, witty, and entertaining as, according to the said publisher, the said dialogue is always found by the public.

While Clarence was engaged in talking with this lady, a very pretty, lively, animated girl, with laughing blue eyes, which, joined to the dazzling fairness of her complexion, gave a Hebe-like youth to her features and expression, was led up to the said lady by a tall young man, and consigned, with the ceremonious bow of the *vieille cour*, to her protection.

"Ah, Mr. Linden," cried the young lady, "I am very glad to see you—such a beautiful ball!—Everybody here that I most like. Have you had any refreshments, mamma? But I need not ask, for I am sure you have not; do come, Mr. Linden will be our cavalier."

"Well, Flora, as you please," said the elderly lady, with a proud and fond look at her beautiful daughter; and they proceeded to the refreshment-room.

No sooner were they seated at one of the tables, than they were accosted by Lord St. George, a nobleman whom Clarence, before he left England, had met more than once at Mr. Talbot's.

"London," said his lordship to her of the diamonds, "has not seemed like the same place since Lady Westborough arrived; your presence brings out all the other luminaries: and therefore a young acquaintance of mine—God bless me, there he is, seated by Lady Flora—very justly called you the 'evening star.'"

"Was that Mr. Linden's pretty saying?" said Lady Westborough, smiling.

"It was," answered Lord St. George; "and, by the by, he is a very sensible, pleasant person, and greatly improved since he left England last."

"What!" said Lady Westborough, in a low tone (for Clarence, though in earnest conversation with Lady Flora, was within hearing), and making room for Lord St. George beside her, "what! did *you* know him before he went to ——? You can probably tell me, then, who—that is to say—what family he is exactly of—the Lindens of Devonshire, or—or—"

"Why, really," said Lord St. George, a little confused, for no man likes to be acquainted with persons whose pedigree he cannot explain, "I don't know what may be his family: I met him at Talbot's four or five years ago; he was then a mere boy, but he struck me as being very clever, and Talbot since told me that he was a nephew of his own."

"Talbot," said Lady Westborough, musingly, "what Talbot?"

"Oh! *the* Talbot—the *ci-divant jeune homme!*"

"What, that charming, clever, animated old gentleman, who used to dress so oddly, and had been so celebrated a *beau garçon* in his day?"

"Exactly so," said Lord St. George, taking snuff, and delighted to find he had set his young acquaintance on so honourable a footing.

"I did not know he was still alive," said Lady Westborough, and then, turning her eyes towards Clarence and her daughter, she added carelessly, "Mr. Talbot is very rich, is he not?"

"Rich as Crœsus," replied Lord St. George, with a sigh.

"And Mr. Linden is his heir, I suppose?"

"In all probability," answered Lord St. George; "though I believe I can boast a distant relationship to Talbot. However, I could not make him fully understand it the other day, though I took particular pains to explain it."

While this conversation was going on between the Mar-

chioness of Westborough and Lord St. George, a dialogue equally interesting to the parties concerned, and I hope, equally light, witty, and entertaining to readers in general, was sustained between Clarence and Lady Flora.

"How long shall you stay in England?" asked the latter, looking down.

"I have not yet been able to decide," replied Clarence, "for it rests with the ministers, not me. Directly Lord Aspeden obtains another appointment, I am promised the office of Secretary of Legation; but till then, I am—

"'A captive in Augusta's towers
To beauty and her train.'"

"Oh!" cried Lady Flora, laughing, "you mean Mrs. Desborough and her train: see where they sweep! Pray go and render her homage."

"It *is* rendered," said Linden, in a low voice, "without so long a pilgrimage, but perhaps despised."

Lady Flora's laugh was hushed; the deepest blushes suffused her cheeks, and the whole character of that face, before so playful and joyous, seemed changed, as by a spell, into a grave, subdued, and even timid look.

Linden resumed, and his voice scarcely rose above a *whisper*. A whisper! O delicate and fairy sound! music that speaketh to the heart, as if loth to break the spell that binds it while it listens! Sigh breathed into words, and freighting love in tones languid, like homeward bees, by the very sweets with which they are charged! "Do you remember," said he, "that evening at —— when we last parted? and the boldness which at that time you were gentle enough to forgive?"

Lady Flora replied not.

"And do you remember," continued Clarence, "that I told you that it was not as an unknown and obscure adventurer that I would *claim* the hand of her whose heart *as* an adventurer I had won?"

Lady Flora raised her eyes for one moment, and encoun-

tering the ardent gaze of Clarence, as instantly dropped them.

"The time is not *yet* come," said Linden, "for the fulfilment of this promise; but may I—dare I hope, that when it does, I shall not be——"

"Flora, my love," said Lady Westborough, "let me introduce to you Lord Borodaile."

Lady Flora turned—the spell was broken; and the lovers were instantly transformed into ordinary mortals. But, as Flora, after returning Lord Borodaile's address, glanced her eye towards Clarence, she was struck with the sudden and singular change of his countenance; the flush of youth and passion was fled, his complexion was deadly pale, and his eyes were fixed with a searching and unaccountable meaning upon the face of the young nobleman, who was alternately addressing, with a quiet and somewhat haughty fluency, the beautiful mother, and the more lovely, though less commanding, daughter. Directly Linden perceived that he was observed, he rose, turned away, and was soon lost among the crowd.

Lord Borodaile, the son and heir of the powerful Earl of Ulswater, was about the age of thirty, small, slight, and rather handsome than otherwise, though his complexion was dark and sallow; and a very aquiline nose gave a stern and somewhat severe air to his countenance. He had been for several years abroad, in various parts of the Continent, and (no other field for an adventurous and fierce spirit presenting itself) had served with the gallant Earl of Effingham, in the war between the Turks and Russians, as a volunteer in the armies of the latter. In this service he had been highly distinguished for courage and conduct; and, on his return to England about a twelvemonth since, had obtained the command of a cavalry regiment. Passionately fond of his profession, he entered into its minutest duties with a zeal not exceeded by the youngest and poorest subaltern in the army.

His manners were very cold, haughty, collected, and

self-possessed, and his conversation that of a man who has cultivated his intellect rather in the world than the closet. I mean, that, perfectly ignorant of things, he was driven to converse solely upon persons, and having imbibed no other philosophy than that which worldly deceits and disappointments bestow, his remarks, though shrewd, were bitterly sarcastic, and partook of all the ill-nature for which a very scanty knowledge of the world gives a sour and malevolent mind so ready an excuse.

"How very disagreeable Lord Borodaile is!" said Lady Flora, when the object of the remark turned away, and rejoined some idlers of his corps.

"Disagreeable!" said Lady Westborough. "I think him charming; he is so sensible. How true his remarks on the world are!"

Thus is it always: the young judge harshly of those who undeceive or revolt their enthusiasm; and the more advanced in years, who have not learned by a diviner wisdom, to look upon the human follies and errors by which they have suffered, with a pitying and lenient eye, consider every maxim of severity on those frailties as the proof of a superior knowledge, and praise that as a profundity of thought which in reality is but an infirmity of temper.

Clarence is now engaged in a *minuet de la cour* with the beautiful Countess of ——, the best dancer of the day in England. Lady Flora is flirting with half a dozen *beaux*, the more violently in proportion as she observes the animation which which Clarence converses, and the grace with which his partner moves; and, having thus left our two principal personages occupied and engaged, let us turn for a moment to a room which we have not entered.

This is a forlorn, deserted chamber, destined to cards, which are never played in this temple of Terpsichore. At the far end of this room, opposite to the fireplace, are seated four men, engaged in earnest conversation.

The tallest of these was Lord Quintown, a nobleman remarkable at that day for his personal advantages, his

good fortune with the *beau sexe*, his attempts at parliamentary eloquence, in which he was lamentably unsuccessful, and his adherence to Lord North. Next to him sat Mr. St. George, the younger brother of Lord St. George, a gentleman to whom power and place seemed married without hope of divorce, for, whatever had been the changes of ministry for the last twelve years, he, secure in a lucrative though subordinate situation, had "smiled at the whirlwind, and defied the storm," and, while all things shifted and vanished round him, like clouds and vapours, had remained fixed and stationary as a star. "Solid St. George," was his appellative by his friends, and his enemies did not grudge him the title. The third was the minister for ——; and the fourth was Clarence's friend, Lord Aspeden. Now this nobleman, blessed with a benevolent, smooth, calm countenance, valued himself especially upon his diplomatic elegance in turning a compliment.

Having a great taste for literature as well as diplomacy, this respected and respectable peer also possessed a curious felicity for applying quotation; and nothing rejoiced him so much as when, in the same phrase, he was enabled to set the two jewels of his courtliness of flattery and his profundity of erudition. Unhappily enough, his compliments were seldom as well taken as they were meant; and, whether from the ingratitude of the persons complimented, or the ill fortune of the noble adulator, seemed sometimes to produce indignation in place of delight. It has been said that his civilities had cost Lord Aspeden four duels and one beating; but these reports were probably the malicious invention of those who had never tasted the delicacies of his flattery.

Now these four persons being all members of the Privy Council, and being thus engaged in close and earnest conference, were, you will suppose, employed in discussing their gravities and secrets of state—no such thing: that whisper from Lord Quintown, the handsome nobleman, to Mr. St. George, is no hoarded and valuable information

which would rejoice the heart of the editor of an opposition paper, no direful murmur, "perplexing monarchs with the dread of change;" it is only a recent piece of scandal, touching the virtue of a lady of the court, which (albeit the sage listener seems to pay so devout an attention to the news) is far more interesting to the gallant and handsome informant than to his brother statesman; and that emphatic and vehement tone with which Lord Aspeden is assuring the minister for —— of some fact, is merely an angry denunciation of the chicanery practised at the last Newmarket.

"By the by, Aspeden," said Lord Quintown, "who is that good-looking fellow always flirting with Lady Flora Ardenne—an *attaché* of yours, is he not?"

"Oh! Linden, I suppose you mean. A very sensible, clever young fellow, who has a great genius for business, and plays the flute admirably. I must have him for my secretary, my dear lord, mind that."

"With such a recommendation, Lord Aspeden," said the minister, with a bow, "the state would be a great loser did it not elect your *attaché*, who plays so admirably on the flute, to the office of your secretary. Let us join the dancers."

"I shall go and talk with Count B——," quoth Mr. St. George.

"And I shall make my court to his beautiful wife," said the minister, sauntering into the ballroom, to which his fine person and graceful manners were much better adapted than was his genius to the cabinet, or his eloquence to the senate.

The morning had long dawned, and Clarence, for whose mind pleasure was more fatiguing than business, lingered near the door, to catch one last look of Lady Flora before he retired. He saw her leaning on the arm of Lord Borodaile, and hastening to join the dancers with her usual light step and laughing air; for Clarence's short conference with her had, in spite of his subsequent flirtations,

rendered her happier than she had ever felt before. Again a change passed over Clarence's countenance—a change which I find it difficult to express without borrowing from those celebrated German dramatists who could portray in such exact colours "a look of mingled joy, sorrow, hope, passion, rapture, and despair," for the look was not that of jealousy alone, although it certainly partook of its nature, but a little also of interest, and a little of sorrow; and when he turned away, and slowly descended the stairs, his eyes were full of tears, and his thoughts far—far away; —whither?

CHAPTER XXX.

Quæ fert adolescentia
Ea ne me celet, consuefeci filium.[1]—TERENT.

THE next morning Clarence was lounging over his breakfast and glancing listlessly now at the pages of the newspapers, now at the various engagements for the week, which lay confusedly upon his table, when he received a note from Talbot, requesting to see him as soon as possible.

"Had it not been for that man," said Clarence to himself, "what should I have been now? But, at least, I have not disgraced his friendship. I have already ascended the roughest, because the lowest, steps on the hill where Fortune builds her temple. I have already won for the name I have chosen some 'golden opinions' to gild its obscurity. One year more may confirm my destiny, and ripen hope into success: then—then, I may perhaps throw off a disguise that, while it befriended, has not degraded me, and avow myself to *her!* Yet how much better to dignify the name I have assumed, than to owe respect only to that which I have not been deemed worthy to inherit! Well, well, these are bitter thoughts; let me turn to others.

[1] The things which youth proposes I accustomed my son that he should never conceal from me.

How beautiful Flora looked last night! and, *he—he*—but enough of this: I must dress, and then to Talbot."

Muttering these wayward fancies, Clarence rose, completed his toilet, sent for his horses, and repaired to a village about seven miles from London, where Talbot, having yielded to Clarence's fears and solicitations, and left his former insecure tenement, now resided under the guard and care of an especial and private watchman.

It was a pretty, quiet villa, surrounded by a plantation and pleasure-ground of some extent for a suburban residence, in which the old philosopher (for though in some respects still frail and prejudiced, Talbot deserved that name) held his home. The ancient servant, on whom four years had passed lightly and favouringly, opened the door to Clarence, with his usual smile of greeting, and familiar, yet respectful, salutation, and ushered our hero into a room, furnished with the usual fastidious and rather feminine luxury which characterised Talbot's tastes. Sitting with his back turned to the light, in a large easy-chair, Clarence found the wreck of the once gallant, gay Lothario.

There was not much alteration in his countenance since we last saw him; the lines, it is true, were a little more decided, and the cheeks a little more sunken; but the dark eye beamed with all its wonted vivacity, and the delicate contour of the mouth preserved all its physiognomical characteristics of the inward man. He rose with somewhat more difficulty than he was formerly wont to do, and his limbs had lost much of their symmetrical proportions; yet the kind clasp of his hand was as firm and warm as when it had pressed that of the boyish *attaché* four years since; and the voice which expressed his salutation yet breathed its unconquered suavity and distinctness of modulation. After the customary greetings and inquiries were given and returned, the young man drew his chair near to Talbot's, and said—

"You sent for me, dear sir; have you anything more important than usual to impart to me?—or—and I hope *this*

is the case—have you at last thought of any commission, however trifling, in the execution of which I can be of use?"

"Yes, Clarence, I wish your judgment to select me some strawberries—you know that I am a great epicure in fruit—and get me the new work Dr. Johnson has just published. There, are you contented? And now, tell me all about your horse, does he step well? Has he the true English head and shoulder? Are his legs fine, yet strong? Is he full of spirit and devoid of vice?"

"He is all this, sir, thanks to you for him."

"Ah!" cried Talbot—

> "'Old as I am, for riding feats unfit,
> The shape of horses I remember yet.'

And now let us hear how you like Ranelagh; and above all how you liked the ball last night."

And the vivacious old man listened with the profoundest appearance of interest to all the particulars of Clarence's animated detail. His vanity, which made him wish to be loved, had long since taught him the surest method of becoming so; and with him, every visitor, old, young, the man of books, or the disciple of the world, was sure to find the readiest and even eagerest sympathy in every amusement or occupation. But for Clarence, this interest lay deeper than in the surface of courtly breeding. Gratitude had first bound to him his adopted son, then a tie, yet unexplained, and lastly, but not least, the pride of protection. He was vain of the personal and mental attractions of his *protégé*, and eager for the success of one whose honours would reflect credit on himself.

But there was one part of Clarence's account of the last night to which the philosopher paid a still deeper attention, and on which he was more minute in his advice; what this was, I cannot, as yet, reveal to the reader.

The conversation then turned on light and general matters. The scandal, the literature, the politics, the *on dits*

of the day; and lastly upon women; thence Talbot dropped into his office of Mentor.

"A celebrated cardinal said, very wisely, that few ever did anything among men until women were no longer an object to them. That is the reason, by the by, why I never succeeded with the former, and why people seldom acquire any reputation, except for a hat, or a horse, till they marry. Look round at the various occupations of life. How few bachelors are eminent in any of them! So you see, Clarence, you will have my leave to marry Lady Flora as soon as you please."

Clarence coloured, and rose to depart. Talbot followed him to the door, and then said, in a careless way, "By the by, I had almost forgotten to tell you that, as you have now many new expenses, you will find the yearly sum you have hitherto received doubled. To give you this information is the chief reason why I sent for you this morning. God bless you, my dear boy."

And Talbot shut the door, despite his politeness, in the face and thanks of his adopted son.

CHAPTER XXXI.

There is a great difference between seeking to raise a laugh from everything, and seeking in everything what justly may be laughed at.—Lord Shaftesbury.

Behold our hero, now in the zenith of distinguished dissipations! Courteous, attentive, and animated, the women did not esteem him the less for admiring them rather than himself; while, by the gravity of his demeanour to men—the eloquent yet unpretending flow of his conversation whatever topics of intellectual interest were discussed—the plain and solid sense which he threw into his remarks—and the avidity with which he courted the society of all distinguished for literary or political eminence, he was silently,

but surely, establishing himself in esteem as well as popularity, and laying the certain foundation of future honour and success.

Thus, although he had been only four months returned to England, he was already known and courted in every circle and universally spoken of as among "the most rising young gentlemen" whom fortune and the administration had marked for their own. His history, during the four years in which we have lost sight of him, is briefly told.

He soon won his way into the good graces of Lord Aspeden; became his private secretary, and occasionally his confidant. Universally admired for his attraction of form and manner, and, though aiming at reputation, not averse to pleasure, he had that position which fashion confers at the Court of ——, when Lady Westborough and her beautiful daughter, then only seventeen, came to ——, in the progress of a continental tour, about a year before his return to England. Clarence and Lady Flora were naturally brought much together in the restricted circle of a small court, and intimacy soon ripened into attachment.

Lord Aspeden being recalled, Clarence accompanied him to England; and the ex-minister, really liking much one who was so useful to him, had faithfully promised to procure him the office and honour of Secretary whenever his lordship should be reappointed Minister.

Three intimate acquaintances had Clarence Linden. The one was the Honourable Henry Trollolop, the second Mr. Callythorpe, and the third Sir Christopher Findlater. We will sketch them to you in an instant. Mr. Trollolop was a short, stout gentleman, with a very thoughtful countenance,—that is to say, he wore spectacles and took snuff.

Mr. Trollolop—we delight in pronouncing that soft, liquid name—was eminently distinguished by a love of metaphysics—metaphysics were in a great measure the order of the day; but fate had endowed Mr. Trollolop with a singular and felicitous confusion of ideas. Reid, Berkeley, Cudworth, Hobbes, all lay jumbled together in most

edifying chaos at the bottom of Mr. Trollolop's capacious mind; and whenever he opened his mouth, the imprisoned enemies came rushing and scrambling out, overturning and contradicting each other in a manner quite astounding to the ignorant spectator. Mr. Callythorpe was meagre, thin, sharp, and yellow. Whether from having a great propensity for nailing stray acquaintances, or being particularly heavy company, or from any other cause better known to the wits of the period than to us, he was occasionally termed by his friends the "yellow hammer." The peculiar characteristics of this gentleman were his sincerity and friendship. These qualities led him into saying things the most disagreeable, with the civilest and coolest manner in the world—always prefacing them with, "You know, my dear so and so, *I* am your true friend." If this proof of amity was now and then productive of altercation, Mr. Callythorpe, who was a great patriot, had another and a nobler plea—"Sir," he would say, putting his hand to his heart—"sir, I'm an Englishman—I know not what it is to feign." Of a very different stamp was Sir Christopher Findlater. Little cared he for the subtleties of the human mind, and not much more for the disagreeable duties of "an Englishman." Honest and jovial—red in the cheeks—empty in the head—born to twelve thousand a year—educated in the country, and heir to an earldom, Sir Christopher Findlater piqued himself, notwithstanding his worldly advantages, usually so destructive to the kindlier affections, on having the best heart in the world, and this good heart, having a very bad head to regulate and support it, was the perpetual cause of error to the owner and evil to the public.

One evening, when Clarence was alone in his rooms, Mr. Trollolop entered.

"My dear Linden," said the visitor, "how are you?"

"I am, as I hope you are, very well," answered Clarence.

"The human mind," said Trollolop, taking off his great-coat——

"Sir Christopher Findlater and Mr. Callythorpe, sir," said the valet.

"Pshaw! What has Sir Christopher Findlater to do with the human mind?" muttered Mr. Trollolop.

Sir Christopher entered with a swagger and a laugh. "Well, old fellow, how do you do? Deuced cold this evening."

"Though it *is* an evening in May," observed Clarence; "but then, this cursed climate."

"Climate!" interrupted Mr. Callythorpe, "it is the best climate in the world: I am an Englishman, and I never abuse my country."

"'England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!'"

"As to climate," said Trollolop, "there is no climate, neither here nor elsewhere: the climate is in your mind, the chair is in your mind, and the table too, though I dare say you are stupid enough to think the two latter are in the room; the human mind, my dear Findlater——"

"Don't *mind* me, Trollolop," cried the baronet, "I can't bear your clever heads; give me a good heart—that's worth all the heads in the world, d—n me if it is not! Eh, Linden?"

"Your good heart," cried Trollolop, in a passion—(for all your self-called philosophers are a little choleric)—"your good heart is all cant and nonsense—there is no heart at all—we are all mind."

"I'll be hanged if I'm all mind," said the baronet.

"At least," quoth Linden, gravely, "no one ever accused you of it before."

"We are all mind," pursued the reasoner; "we are all mind, *un moulin à raisonnement*. Our ideas are derived from two sources, sensation or memory. That neither our thoughts nor passions, nor our ideas formed by the imagination, exist without the mind, everybody will allow;[1] there-

[1] Berkeley, Sect. iii., *Principles of Human Knowledge.*

fore, you see, the human mind is—in short, there is nothing *in* the world but the human mind!"

"Nothing could be better demonstrated," said Clarence.

"I don't believe it," quoth the baronet.

"But you do believe it, and you must believe it," cried Trollolop; "for 'the Supreme Being has implanted within us the principle of credulity,' and therefore you do believe it."

"But I don't," cried Sir Christopher.

"You are mistaken," replied the metaphysician, calmly; "because I *must* speak truth."

"Why must you, pray?" said the baronet.

"Because," answered Trollolop, taking snuff, "there is a principle of veracity implanted in our nature."

"I wish I were a metaphysician," said Clarence, with a sigh.

"I am so glad to hear you say so, for you know, my dear Linden," said Callythorpe, "that I am your true friend, and I must therefore tell you that you are shamefully ignorant. You are not offended?"

"Not at all!" said Clarence, trying to smile.

"And you, my dear Findlater" (turning to the baronet), "you know that I wish you well—you know that I never flatter, I'm your real friend, so you must not be angry; but you really are not considered a Solomon."

"Mr. Callythorpe!" exclaimed the baronet in a rage (the best-hearted people can't always bear truth), "what do you mean?"

"You must not be angry, my good sir—you must not really. I can't help telling you of your faults, for I am a true Briton, sir, a true Briton, and leave lying to slaves and Frenchmen."

"You are in an error," said Trollolop; "Frenchmen don't lie, at least not naturally, for in the human mind, as I before said, the Divine Author has implanted a principle of veracity which——"

"My dear sir," interrupted Callythorpe, very affectionately, "you remind me of what people say of *you*."

"Memory may be reduced to sensation, since it is only a weaker sensation," quoth Trollolop; "but proceed."

"You know, Trollolop," said Callythorpe, in a singularly endearing intonation of voice, "you know that I never flatter; flattery is unbecoming a true friend—nay, more, it is unbecoming a native of our happy isles, and people do say of you that you know nothing whatsoever, no, not an iota, of all that nonsensical, worthless philosophy of which you are always talking. Lord St. George said the other day 'that you were very conceited'—'No, not conceited,' replied Dr. ——, 'only ignorant,' so if I were you, Trollolop, I would cut metaphysics—you're not offended?"

"By no means," cried Trollolop, foaming at the mouth.

"For my part," said the good-hearted Sir Christopher, whose wrath had now subsided, rubbing his hands—"for my part, I see no good in any of those things: I never read—never—and I don't see how I'm a bit worse for it. A good man, Linden, in my opinion, only wants to do his duty, and that is very easily done."

"A good man—and what is good?" cried the metaphysician, triumphantly. "Is it implanted within us? Hobbes, according to Reid, who is our last, and consequently best, philosopher, endeavors to demonstrate that there is no difference between right and wrong."

"I have no idea of what you mean," cried Sir Christopher.

"Idea!" exclaimed the pious philosopher. "Sir, give me leave to tell you that no solid proof has ever been advanced of the existence of ideas; they are a mere fiction and hypothesis. Nay, sir, 'hence arises that scepticism which disgraces our philosophy of the mind.' Ideas!—Findlater, you are a sceptic and an idealist."

"I?" cried the affrighted baronet; "upon my honour I am no such thing. Everybody knows that I am a Christian, and——"

"Ah!" interrupted Callythorpe, with a solemn look,

"everybody knows that you are not one of those horrid persons—those atrocious deists, and atheists and sceptics, from whom the Church and freedom of old England have suffered such danger. I am a true Briton of the good old school; and I confess, Mr. Trollolop, that I do not like to hear any opinions but the right ones."

"Right ones being only those which Mr. Callythorpe professes," said Clarence.

"Exactly so!" rejoined Mr. Callythorpe.

"The human mind," commenced Mr. Trollolop, stirring the fire; when Clarence, who began to be somewhat tired of this conversation, rose. "You will excuse me," said he, "but I am particularly engaged, and it is time to dress. Harrison will get you tea or whatever else you are inclined for."

"The human mind," renewed Trollolop, not heeding the interruption; and Clarence forthwith left the room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

You blame Marcius for being proud.—*Coriolanus.*

Here is another fellow, a marvellous pretty hand at fashioning a compliment.—*The Tanner of Tyburn.*

THERE was a brilliant ball at Lady T——'s, a personage who, every one knows, did, in the year 17— give the best balls, and have the best-dressed people at them, in London. It was about half-past twelve, when Clarence, released from his three friends, arrived at the countess's. When he entered, the first thing which struck him was Lord Borodaile in close conversation with Lady Flora.

Clarence paused for a few moments, and then, sauntering towards them, caught Flora's eye—coloured, and advanced. Now, if there was a haughty man in Europe, it was Lord Borodaile. He was not proud of his birth, nor

fortune, but he was proud of himself; and, next to that pride, he was proud of being a gentleman. He had an exceeding horror of all common people; a Claverhouse sort of supreme contempt to "puddle blood;" his lip seemed to wear scorn as a garment; a lofty and stern self-admiration, rather than self-love, sat upon his forehead as on a throne. He had, as it were, an awe of himself; his thoughts were so many mirrors of Viscount Borodaile dressed *en dieu*. His mind was a little Versailles, in which *self* sate like Louis XIV., and saw nothing but pictures of *its* self, sometimes as Jupiter, and sometimes as Apollo. What marvel then, that Lord Borodaile was a very unpleasant companion? for every human being he had "something of contempt." His eye was always eloquent in disdaining; to the plebeian it said—"You are not a gentleman;" to the prince—"You are not Lord Borodaile."

Yet, with all this, he had his good points. He was as brave as a lion: strictly honourable; and though very ignorant, and very self-sufficient, had that sort of dogged good sense which one very often finds in men of stern hearts, who, if they have many prejudices, have little feeling, to overcome.

Very stiffly, and very haughtily, did Lord Borodaile draw up, when Clarence approached, and addressed Lady Flora; much more stiffly, and much more haughtily, did he return, though with old-fashioned precision of courtesy, Clarence's bow, when Lady Westborough introduced them to each other. Not that this *hauteur* was intended as a particular affront: it was only the agreeability of his lordship's *general* manner.

"Are you engaged?" said Clarence to Flora.

"I am, at present, to Lord Borodaile."

"After him, may I hope?"

Lady Flora nodded assent, and disappeared with Lord Borodaile.

His Royal Highness the Duke of —— came up to Lady

Westborough; and Clarence, with a smiling countenance and an absent heart, plunged into the crowd. There he met Lord Aspeden, in conversation with the Earl of Holdenworth, one of the administration.

"Ah, Linden," said the diplomatist, "let me introduce you to Lord Holdenworth—a clever young man, my dear lord, and plays the flute beautifully." With this eulogium, Lord Aspeden glided away; and Lord Holdenworth, after some conversation with Linden, honoured him by an invitation to dinner the next day.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

'Tis true his nature may with faults abound;
But who will cavil when the *heart* is sound?

STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.[1]—HOR.

THE next day Sir Christopher Findlater called on Clarence. "Let us lounge in the park," said he.

"With pleasure," replied Clarence; and into the park they lounged.

By the way they met a crowd, who were hurrying a man to prison. The good-hearted Sir Christopher stopped: "Who is that poor fellow?" said he.

"It is the celebrated"—(in England all criminals are celebrated. Thurtell was a hero, Thistlewood a patriot, and Fauntleroy was discovered to be exactly like Buonaparte!)—"it is the celebrated robber, John Jefferies, who broke into Mrs. Wilson's house, and cut the throats of herself and her husband, wounded the maidservant, and split the child's skull with the poker." Clarence pressed forward:—"I have seen that man before," thought he. He looked again, and recognised the face of the robber who had escaped from Talbot's house on the eventful night

[1] The foolish while avoiding vice run into the opposite extremes.

which had made Clarence's fortune. It was a strongly marked and rather handsome countenance, which would not easily be forgotten; and a single circumstance of excitement will stamp features on the memory as deeply as the commonplace intercourse of years.

"John Jefferies!" exclaimed the baronet; "let us come away."

"Linden," continued Sir Christopher, "that fellow was my servant once. He robbed me to some considerable extent. I caught him. He appealed to my heart, and you know, my dear fellow, that was irresistible, so I let him off. Who could have thought he would have turned out so?" And the baronet proceeded to eulogise his own good nature, by which it is just necessary to remark that one miscreant had been saved for a few years from transportation, in order to rob and murder *ad libitum*, and, having fulfilled the office of a common pest, to suffer on the gallows at last. What a fine thing it is to have a good heart! Both our gentlemen now sank into a reverie, from which they were awakened, at the entrance of the park, by a young man in rags who, with a piteous tone, supplicated charity. Clarence, who, to his honour be it spoken, spent an allotted and considerable part of his income in judicious and laborious benevolence, had read a little of political morals, then beginning to be understood, and walked on. The good-hearted baronet put his hand in his pocket, and gave the beggar half a guinea, by which a young, strong man, who had only just commenced the trade, was confirmed in his imposition for the rest of his life; and, instead of the useful support, became the pernicious incumbrance of society.

Sir Christopher had now recovered his spirits. "What's like a good action?" said he to Clarence, with a swelling breast.

The park was crowded to excess; our loungers were joined by Lord St. George. His lordship was a stanch Tory. He could not endure Wilkes, liberty, or general

education. He launched out against the enlightenment of domestics.[1]

"What has made you so bitter?" said Sir Christopher.

"My valet," cried Lord St. George,—"he has invented a new toasting-fork, is going to take out a patent, make his fortune, *and leave me;* that's what I call ingratitude, Sir Christopher; for I ordered his wages to be raised five pounds but last year."

"It *was* very ungrateful," said the ironical Clarence.

"Very!" reiterated the good-hearted Sir Christopher.

"You cannot recommend me a valet, Findlater," renewed his lordship, "a good, honest, sensible fellow, who can neither read nor write?"

"No—o—o—that is to say, yes! I can; my old servant Collard is out of place, and is as ignorant as—as—"

"I—or you are?" said Lord St. George, with a laugh.

"Precisely," replied the baronet.

"Well, then, I take your recommendation: send him to me to-morrow at twelve."

"I will," said Sir Christopher.

"My dear Findlater," cried Clarence, when Lord St. George was gone, "did you not tell me some time ago, that Collard was a great rascal, and very intimate with Jefferies? and now you recommend him to Lord St. George!"

"Hush, hush, hush!" said the baronet; "he was a great rogue to be sure; but, poor fellow, he came to me yesterday with tears in his eyes, and said he should starve if I would not give him a character; so what could I do?"

"At least, tell Lord St. George the truth," observed Clarence.

"But then Lord St. George would not take him!" rejoined the good-hearted Sir Christopher, with forcible

[1] The ancestors of our present footmen, if we may believe Sir William Temple, seem to have been to the full as intellectual as their descendants. "I have had," observes the philosophic statesman, "several servants far gone in divinity, others in poetry; have known in the families of some friends, a keeper deep in the Rosicrucian mysteries, and a laundress firm in those of Epicurus."

naïveté. "No, no, Linden, we must not be so hard-hearted; we must forgive and forget;" and so saying the baronet threw out his chest, with the conscious exultation of a man who has uttered a noble sentiment. The moral of this little history is that Lord St. George, having been pillaged "through thick and thin," as the proverb has it, for two years, at last missed a gold watch, and Monsieur Collard finished his career as his exemplary tutor Mr. John Jefferies, had done before him. Ah! what a fine thing it is to have a good heart!

But to return. Just as our wanderers had arrived at the farther end of the park, Lady Westborough and her daughter passed them. Clarence, excusing himself to his friend, hastened towards them, and was soon occupied in saying the prettiest things in the world to the prettiest person, at least in his eyes; while Sir Christopher, having done as much mischief as a good heart well can do in a walk of an hour, returned home to write a long letter to his mother, against "learning, and all such nonsense, which only served to blunt the affections and harden the heart."

"Admirable young man!" cried the mother, with tears in her eyes. "A good heart is better than all the heads in the world."

Amen—

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Make way, Sir Geoffrey Peveril, or you will compel me to do that I may be sorry for!"

"You shall make no way here but at your peril," said Sir Geoffrey; "this is my ground."—*Peveril of the Peak.*

One night on returning home from a party at Lady Westborough's in Hanover Square, Clarence observed a man before him walking with an uneven and agitated step. His right hand was clenched, and he frequently raised it as

with a sudden impulse, and struck fiercely as if at some imagined enemy.

The stranger slackened his pace. Clarence passed him, and, turning round to satisfy the idle curiosity which the man's eccentric gestures had provoked, his eye met a dark, lowering, iron countenance, which, despite the lapse of four years, he recognised on the moment—it was Wolfe, the republican.

Clarence moved, involuntarily, with a quicker step; but in a few minutes, Wolfe, who was vehemently talking to himself, once more passed him; the direction he took was also Clarence's way homeward, and he therefore followed the republican, though at some slight distance, and on the opposite side of the way. A gentleman on foot, apparently returning from a party, met Wolfe, and with an air half haughty, half unconscious, took the wall; though, according to old-fashioned rules of street courtesy, he was on the wrong side for asserting the claim. The stern republican started, drew himself up to his full height, and sturdily and doggedly placed himself directly in the way of the unjust claimant. Clarence was now nearly opposite to the two, and saw all that was going on.

With a motion a little rude and very contemptuous, the passenger attempted to put Wolfe aside, and win his path. Little did he know of the unyielding nature he had to do with; the next instant the republican, with a strong hand, forced him from the pavement into the very kennel, and silently and coldly continued his way.

The wrath of the discomfited passenger was vehemently kindled.

"Insolent dog!" cried he, in a loud and arrogant tone, "your baseness is your protection." Wolfe turned rapidly, and made but two strides before he was once more by the side of his defeated opponent.

"What did you say?" he asked, in his low, deep, hoarse voice.

Clarence stopped. "There will be mischief done here,"

thought he, as he called to mind the stern temper of the republican.

"Merely," said the other, struggling with his rage, "that it is not for men of my rank to avenge the insults offered us by those of yours!"

"Your rank," said Wolfe, bitterly retorting the contempt of the stranger, in a tone of the loftiest disdain; "your rank, poor changeling! And what are you, that you should lord it over me? Are your limbs stronger? your muscles firmer? your proportions juster? your mind acuter? your conscience clearer? Fool—fool—go home and measure yourself with lackies!"

The republican ceased, and pushing the stranger aside, turned slowly away. But this last insult enraged the passenger beyond all prudence. Before Wolfe had proceeded two paces, he muttered a desperate but brief oath, and struck the reformer with a strength so much beyond what his figure (which was small and slight) appeared to possess, that the powerful and gaunt frame of Wolfe recoiled backward several steps, and, had it not been for the iron railing of the neighbouring area, would have fallen to the ground.

Clarence pressed forward; the face of the rash aggressor was turned towards him; the features were Lord Borodaile's. He had scarcely time to make this discovery, before Wolfe had recovered himself. With a wild and savage cry, rather than exclamation, he threw himself upon his antagonist, twined his sinewy arms round the frame of the struggling, but powerless, nobleman, raised him in the air, with the easy strength of a man lifting a child, held him aloft for one moment, with a bitter and scornful laugh of wrathful derision, and then dashed him to the ground, and, planting his foot upon Borodaile's breast said—

"So shall it be with all of you; there shall be but one instant between your last offence and your first but final debasement. Lie there! it is your proper place! By the only law which you yourself acknowledge, the law which

gives the right divine to the strongest; if you stir limb or muscle, I will crush the breath from your body."

But Clarence was now by the side of Wolfe, a new and more powerful opponent. "Look you," said he: "you have received an insult, and you have done justice yourself. I condemn the offence, and quarrel not with you for the punishment; but that punishment is now past: remove your foot, or—"

"What?" shouted Wolfe, fiercely, his lurid and vindictive eye flashing with the released fire of long-pent and cherished passions.

"Or," answered Clarence, calmly, "I will hinder you from committing murder."

At that instant the watchman's voice was heard, and the night's guardian himself was seen hastening from the far end of the street towards the place of contest. Whether this circumstance, or Clarence's answer, somewhat changed the current of the republican's thoughts, or whether his anger, suddenly raised, was now as suddenly subsiding, it is not easy to decide; but he slowly and deliberately moved his foot from the breast of his baffled foe, and, bending down, seemed endeavoring to ascertain the mischief he had done. Lord Borodaile was perfectly insensible.

"You have killed him!" cried Clarence in a voice of horror, "but you shall not escape;" and he placed a desperate and nervous hand on the republican.

"Stand off," said Wolfe, "my blood is up! I would not do more violence to-night than I have done. Stand off! the man moves; see!"

And Lord Borodaile, uttering a long sigh, and attempting to rise, Clarence released his hold of the republican, and bent down to assist the fallen nobleman. Meanwhile, Wolfe, muttering to himself, turned from the spot, and strode haughtily away.

The watchman now came up, and, with his aid, Clarence raised Lord Borodaile. Bruised, stunned, half insensible as he was, that personage lost none of his characteristic

stateliness; he shook off the watchman's arm, as if there was contamination in the touch; and his countenance, still menacing and defying in its expression, turned abruptly towards Clarence, as if he yet expected to meet, and struggle with, a foe.

"How are you, my lord?" said Linden; "not severely hurt, I trust?"

"Well, quite well," cried Borodaile. "Mr. Linden, I think?—I thank you cordially for your assistance; but the dog—the rascal—where is he?"

"Gone," said Clarence.

"Gone! Where—where?" cried Borodaile; "that living man should insult me, and yet escape!"

"Which way did the fellow go?" said the watchman, anticipative of half-a-crown. "I will run after him in a trice, your honour—*I* warrant I nab him."

"No—no—" said Borodaile, haughtily; "I leave my quarrels to no man; if I could not master him myself, no one else shall do it for me. Mr. Linden, excuse me, but I am perfectly recovered, and can walk very well without your polite assistance. Mr. Watchman, I am obliged to you; there is a guinea to reward your trouble."

With these words, intended as a farewell, the proud patrician, smothering his pain, bowed with extreme courtesy to Clarence—again thanked him, and walked on unaided, and alone.

"He is a game blood," said the watchman, pocketing the guinea.

"He is worthy his name," thought Clarence; "though he was in the wrong, my heart yearns to him."

CHAPTER XXXV.

Things wear a vizard which I think to like not.—*Tanner of Tyburn.*

Clarence, from that night, appeared to have formed a sudden attachment to Lord Borodaile. He took every opportunity of cultivating his intimacy, and invariably treated him with a degree of consideration which his knowledge of the world told him was well calculated to gain the good will of his haughty and arrogant acquaintance; but all this was ineffectual in conquering Borodaile's coldness and reserve. To have been once seen in a humiliating and degrading situation is quite sufficient to make a proud man hate the spectator, and, with the confusion of all prejudiced minds, to transfer the sore remembrance of the event to the association of the witness. Lord Borodaile, though always ceremoniously civil, was immovably distant; and avoided, as well as he was able, Clarence's insinuating approaches and address. To add to his indisposition to increase his acquaintance with Linden, a friend of his, a captain in the Guards, once asked him who that Mr. Linden was? and, on his lordship's replying that he did not know, Mr. Percy Bobus, the son of a wine-merchant, though the nephew of a duke, rejoined, "Nobody *does* know."

"Insolent intruder!" thought Lord Borodaile: "a man whom nobody knows to make such advances to *me!*"

A still greater cause of dislike to Clarence arose from jealousy. Ever since the first night of his acquaintance with Lady Flora, Lord Borodaile had paid her unceasing attention. In good earnest, he was greatly struck by her beauty, and had for the last year meditated the necessity of presenting the world with a Lady Borodaile. Now, though his lordship did look upon himself in as favourable a light as a man well can do, yet he could not but own that Clarence *was* very handsome—had a devilish gentlemanlike air—talked with a better grace than the generality of young

men, and danced to perfection. "I detest that fellow!" said Lord Borodaile, involuntarily and aloud, as these unwilling truths forced themselves upon his mind.

"Whom do you detest?" asked Mr. Percy Bobus, who was lying on the sofa in Lord Borodaile's drawing-room, and admiring a pair of red-heeled shoes which decorated his feet.

"That puppy, Linden!" said Lord Borodaile, adjusting his cravat.

"He *is* a deuced puppy, certainly!" rejoined Mr. Percy Bobus, turning round in order to contemplate more exactly the shape of his right shoe. "I can't bear conceit, Borodaile."

"Nor I—I abhor it—it is so d—d disgusting!" replied Lord Borodaile, leaning his chin upon his two hands, and looking full into the glass. "Do you use MacNeile's divine pomatum?"

"No, it's too hard; I get mine from Paris; shall I send you some?"

"Do," said Lord Borodaile.

"Mr. Linden, my lord," said the servant, throwing open the door; and Clarence entered.

"I am very fortunate," said he, with that smile which so few ever resisted, "to find you at home, Lord Borodaile; but as the day was wet, I thought I should have some chance of that pleasure; I therefore wrapped myself up in my roquelaure, and here I am."

Now, nothing could be more diplomatic than the compliment of choosing a wet day for a visit, and exposing one's self to "the pitiless shower," for the greater probability of finding the person visited at home. Not so thought Lord Borodaile; he drew himself up, bowed very solemnly, and said, with cold gravity,

"You are very obliging, *Mr.* Linden."

Clarence coloured, and bit his lip as he seated himself. Mr. Percy Bobus, with true insular breeding, took up the newspaper.

"I think I saw you at Lady C.'s last night," said Clarence;"did you stay there long?"

"No, indeed," answered Borodaile; "I hate her parties."

"One *does* meet such odd people there," observed Mr. Percy Bobus; "creatures one never sees anywhere else."

"I hear," said Clarence, who never abused any one, even the givers of stupid parties, if he could help it, and therefore thought it best to change the conversation—"I hear, Lord Borodaile, that some hunters of yours are to be sold, I purpose being a bidder for Thunderbolt."

"I have a horse to sell you, Mr. Linden," cried Mr. Percy Bobus, springing from the sofa into civility; "a superb creature."

"Thank you," said Clarence laughing; "but I can only afford to buy *one*, and I have taken a great fancy to Thunderbolt."

Lord Borodaile, whose manners were very antiquated in their affability, bowed. Mr. Bobus sank back into his sofa, and resumed the paper.

A pause ensued. Clarence was chilled in spite of himself. Lord Borodaile played with a paper-cutter.

"Have you been to Lady Westborough's lately?" said Clarence breaking silence.

"I was there last night," replied Lord Borodaile.

"Indeed!" cried Clarence. "I wonder I did not see you there, for I dined with them."

Lord Borodaile's hair curled of itself. "*He* dined there, and I only asked in the evening!" thought he; but his sarcastic temper suggested a very different reply.

"Ah," said he, elevating his eyebrows, "Lady Westborough told me she had had some people to dinner whom she had been *obliged* to ask. Bobus, is that the *Public Advertiser?* See whether that d—d fellow Junius has been writing any more of his venomous letters."

Clarence was not a man apt to take offence, but he felt his bile rise: "It will not do to show it," thought he; so he made some further remark in a jesting vein; and, after

a very ill-sustained conversation of some minutes longer, rose, apparently in the best humour possible, and departed, with a solemn intention never again to enter the house. Thence he went to Lady Westborough's.

The marchioness was in her boudoir; Clarence was as usual admitted, for Lady Westborough loved amusement above all things in the world, and Clarence had the art of affording it better than any young man of her acquaintance. On entering, he saw Lady Flora hastily retreating through an opposite door. She turned her face towards him for one moment—that moment was sufficient to freeze his blood: the large tears were rolling down her cheeks, which were as white as death, and the expression of those features, usually so laughing and joyous, was that of utter and ineffable despair.

Lady Westborough was as lively, as bland, and as agreeable as ever; but Clarence thought he detected something restrained and embarrassed lurking beneath all the graces of her exterior manner; and the single glance he had caught of the pale and altered face of Lady Flora was not calculated to reassure his mind or animate his spirits. His visit was short; when he left the room, he lingered for a few moments in the ante-chamber in the hope of again seeing Lady Flora. While thus loitering, his ear caught the sound of Lady Westborough's voice: "When Mr. Linden calls again, you have my orders never to admit him into this room; he will be shown into the drawing-room."

With a hasty step and a burning cheek Clarence quitted the house, and hurried, first to his solitary apartments, and thence, impatient of loneliness, to the peaceful retreat of his benefactor.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A maiden's thoughts do check my trembling hand.—DRAYTON.

THERE is something very delightful in turning from the unquietness and agitation, the fever, the ambition, the harsh and worldly realities of man's character to the gentle and deep recesses of woman's more secret heart. Within her musings is a realm of haunted and fairy thought, to which the things of this turbid and troubled life have no entrance. What to her are the changes of state, the rivalries and contentions which form the staple of *our* existence? For her there is an intense and fond philosophy, before whose eye substances flit and fade like shadows, and shadows grow glowingly into truth. Her soul's creations are not as the moving and mortal images seen in the common day: they are things, like spirits steeped in the dim moonlight, heard when all else are still, and busy when earth's labourers are at rest! They are

> Such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and their little life
> Is rounded by a sleep.

Hers is the real and uncentred *poetry of being*, which pervades and surrounds her as with an air, which peoples her visions and animates her love, which shrinks from earth into itself, and finds marvel and meditation in all that it beholds within, and which spreads even over the heaven in whose faith she so ardently believes, the mystery and the tenderness of romance.

LETTER I.

FROM LADY FLORA ARDENNE TO MISS ELEANOR TREVANION.

"You say that I have not written to you so punctually of late as I used to do before I came to London, and you impute my negligence to the gaieties and pleasures by

which I am surrounded. *Eh bien!* my dear Eleanor, could you have thought of a better excuse for me? You know how fond *we*—ay, dearest, you as well as I—used to be of dancing, and how earnestly we were wont to anticipate those children's balls at my uncle's, which were the only ones we were ever permitted to attend. I found a stick the other day, on which I had cut seven notches, significant of seven days more to the next ball—we reckoned time by balls then, and danced chronologically. Well, my dear Eleanor, here I am now, brought out, tolerably well-behaved, only not dignified enough, according to mamma—as fond of laughing, talking, and dancing as ever; and yet, do you know, a ball, though still very delightful, is far from being the most important event in creation; its anticipation does not keep me awake of a night: and what is more to the purpose, its recollection does not make me lock up my writing-desk, burn my *portefeuille*, and forget you, all of which you seem to imagine it has been able to effect.

"No, dearest Eleanor, you are mistaken; for were she twice as giddy, and ten times as volatile as she is, your own Flora could never, never forget you, nor the happy hours we have spent together, nor the pretty goldfinches we had in common, nor the little Scotch duets we used to sing together, nor our longings to change them into Italian, nor our disappointment when we did so, nor our laughter at Signor Shrikalini, nor our tears when poor darling Bijou died. And do you remember, dearest, the charming green lawn where we used to play together, and plan tricks for your governess? She was very, very cross, though, I think, we were a little to blame, too. However, I was much the worst! And pray, Eleanor, don't you remember how we used to like being called pretty, and told of the conquests we should make? Do you like all that now? For my part, I am tried of it, at least from the generality of one's flatterers.

"Ah! Eleanor, or 'heigho!' as the young ladies in novels write, do you remember how jealous I was of you at ——,

and how spiteful I was, and how you were an angel, and bore with me, and kissed me, and told me that—that I had nothing to fear? Well, Clar—I mean Mr. Linden, is now in town and so popular, and so admired! I wish we were at —— again, for there we saw him every day, and now we don't meet more than three times a week; and though I like hearing him praised above all things, yet I feel very uncomfortable when that praise comes from very, very pretty women. I wish we were at —— again! Mamma, who is looking more beautiful than ever, is very kind! she says nothing to be sure, but she must see how—that is to say—she must know that—that I—I mean that Clarence is very attentive to me, and that I blush and look exceedingly silly whenever he is; and therefore I suppose that whenever Clarence thinks fit to ask me, I shall not be under the necessity of getting up at six o'clock, and travelling to Gretna Green, through that odious North Road, up the Highgate Hill, and over Finchley Common.

"'But when will he ask you?' My dearest Eleanor, that is more than I can say. To tell you the truth, there is something about Linden which I cannot thoroughly understand. They say he is nephew and heir to the Mr. Talbot whom you may have heard papa talk of; but if so, why the hints, the insinuations, of not being what he seems, which Clarence perpetually throws out, and which only excite my interest without gratifying my curiosity? 'It is not,' he has said, more than once, 'as an obscure adventurer that I will claim your love:' and if I venture, which is very seldom (for I am a little afraid of him), to question his meaning, he either sinks into utter silence, for which, if I had loved *according to book*, and not so naturally, I should be very angry with him, or twists his words into another signification, such as that he would not claim me till he had become something higher and nobler than he is now. Alas, my dear Eleanor, it takes a long time to make an ambassador out of an *attaché*.

"See now if you reproached me justly with scanty corre-

spondences. If I write a line more, I must begin a new sheet, and that will be beyond the power of a frank—a thing which would, I know, break the heart of your dear, good, generous, but a little too prudent aunt, and irrevocably ruin me in her esteem. So God bless you, dearest Eleanor, and believe me most affectionately yours,

"FLORA ARDENNE."

LETTER II.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Pray, dearest Eleanor, does that good aunt of yours—now don't frown, I am not going to speak disrespectfully of her—ever take a liking to young gentlemen whom you detest, and insist upon the fallacy of your opinion, and the unerring rectitude of hers? If so, you can pity and comprehend my grief. Mamma has formed quite an attachment to a very disagreeable person! He is Lord Borodaile, the eldest, and, I believe, the only son of Lord Ulswater. Perhaps you may have met him abroad, for he has been a great traveller: his family is among the most ancient in England, and his father's estate covers half a county. All this mamma tells me, with the most earnest air in the world, whenever I declaim upon his impertinence or *disagreeability*—(is there such a word? there ought to be). 'Well,' said I to-day, 'what's that to me?' 'It may be a great deal to you,' replied mamma significantly, and the blood rushed from my face to my heart. She could not, Eleanor, she could not mean, after all her kindness to Clarence, and in spite of all her penetration into my heart—oh, no, no—she could not. How terribly suspicious this love makes one!

"But if I disliked Lord Borodaile at first, I have hated him of late; for, somehow or other, he is always in the way. If I see Clarence hastening through the crowd to ask me to dance, at that very instant up steps Lord Borodaile with his cold, changeless face, and his haughty, old-

fashioned bow, and his abominable dark complexion—and mamma smiles—and he hopes she finds me disengaged—and I am hurried off—and poor Clarence looks so disappointed and so wretched! You have no idea how ill-tempered this makes me. I could not help asking Lord Borodaile, yesterday, if he was *never* going abroad again, and the hateful creature played with his cravat, and answered 'Never!' I was in hopes that my sullenness would drive his lordship away; *tout au contraire*, 'Nothing,' said he to me the other day, when he was in full pout, 'nothing is so plebeian as good-humour!'

"I wish, then, Eleanor, that he could see your governess; she must be majesty itself in his eyes!

"Ah, dearest, how we belie ourselves! At this moment, when you might think, from the idle, rattling, silly flow of my letter, that my heart was as light and free as it was when we used to play on the green lawn, and under the sunny trees, in the merry days of our childhood, the tears are running down my cheeks; see where they have fallen on the page, and my head throbs as if my thoughts were too full and heavy for it to contain. It is past one! I am alone, and in my own room. Mamma is gone to a rout at H—— House; but I knew I should not meet Clarence there, and so said I was ill, and remained at home. I have done so often of late, whenever I have learned from *him* that he was not going to the same place as mamma. Indeed, I love much better to sit alone and think over his words and looks; and I have drawn, after repeated attempts, a profile likeness of him; and oh, Eleanor, I cannot tell you how dear it is to me; and yet there is not a line, not a look of his countenance which I have not learned by heart, without such useless aids to my memory. But I am ashamed of telling you all this, and my eyes ache so, that I can write no more.

"Ever, as ever, dearest Eleanor, your affectionate friend."

LETTER III.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Eleanor, I am undone! My mother—my mother has been so cruel: but she cannot, she cannot intend it, or she knows very little of my heart. With some, ties may be as easily broken as formed; with others they are twined around life itself.

"Clarence dined with us yesterday, and was unusually animated and agreeable. He was engaged on business with Lord Aspeden afterwards, and left us early. We had a few people in the evening; Lord Borodaile among the rest; and my mother spoke of Clarence, and his relationship to, and expectations from, Mr. Talbot. Lord Borodaile sneered; 'You are mistaken,' said he, sarcastically; 'Mr. Linden may feel it convenient to give out that he is related to so old a family as the Talbots; and since Heaven only knows who or what he is, he may as well claim alliance with one person as another; but he is certainly not the nephew of Mr. Talbot of Scarsdale Park, for that gentleman had no sisters and but one brother, who left an only daughter; that daughter had also but one child, certainly no relation to Mr. Linden. I can vouch for the truth of this statement; for the Talbots are related to, or at least nearly connected with, myself; and I thank Heaven that I have a pedigree, even in its collateral branches, worth learning by heart.' And then Lord Borodaile—I little thought, when I railed against him, what serious cause I should have to hate him—turned to me and harassed me with his tedious attentions the whole of the evening.

"This morning mamma sent for me into her boudoir. 'I have observed,' said she, with the greatest indifference, 'that Mr. Linden has, of *late*, been much too particular in his manner towards you—your foolish and undue familiarity with every one has perhaps given him encouragement. After the gross imposition which Lord Borodaile exposed to

us last night, I cannot but consider the young man as a mere adventurer, and must not only insist on your putting a total termination to civilities, which we must henceforth consider presumption, but I myself shall consider it incumbent upon me greatly to limit the advances he has thought proper to make towards my acquaintance.'

"You may guess how thunderstruck I was by this speech. I could not answer; my tongue literally clove to my mouth, and I was only relieved by a sudden and violent burst of tears. Mamma looked exceedingly displeased, and was just going to speak, when the servant threw open the door, and announced Mr. Linden. I rose hastily, and had only just time to escape, as he entered; but when I heard that dear, dear voice, I could not resist turning for one moment. He saw me—and was struck mute, for the agony of my soul was stamped visibly on my countenance. That moment was over—with a violent effort I tore myself away.

"Eleanor, I can now write no more. God bless you! and *me* too—for I am very, very unhappy.

"F. A."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

What a charming character is a kind old man.—STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

"CHEER up, my dear boy," said Talbot kindly, "we must never despair. What though Lady Westborough has forbidden you the boudoir, a boudoir is a very different thing from a daughter, and you have no right to suppose that the veto extends to both. But now that we are on his subject, do let me reason with you seriously. Have you not already tasted all the pleasures, and been sufficiently annoyed by some of the pains, of acting 'The Incognito'? Be ruled by me: resume your proper name; it is at least one which the proudest might acknowledge; and its dis-

covery will remove the greatest obstacle to the success which you so ardently desire."

Clarence, who was labouring under strong excitement, paused for some moments, as if to collect himself, before he replied: "I have been thrust from my father's home—I have been made the victim of another's crime—I have been denied the rights and name of son; perhaps—(and I say this bitterly) justly denied them, despite of my own innocence. What would you have me do? Resume a name never conceded to me—perhaps not righteously mine—thrust myself upon the unwilling and shrinking hands which disowned and rejected me—blazon my virtues by pretensions which I myself have promised to forego, and foist myself on the notice of strangers by the very claims which my nearest relations dispute? Never—never—never! With the simple name I have assumed—the friend I myself have won—you, my generous benefactor, my real father, who never forsook, nor insulted, me for my misfortunes—with these I have gained some steps in the ladder; with these, and those gifts of nature, a stout heart and a willing hand, of which none can rob me, I will either ascend the rest, even to the summit, or fall to the dust, unknown, but not contemned; unlamented, but not despised."

"Well, well," said Talbot, brushing away a tear which he could not deny to the feeling, even while he disputed the judgment, of the young adventurer—"well, this is all very fine and very foolish; but you shall never want friend or father while I live, or when I have ceased to live; but come—sit down, share my dinner, which is not very good, and my dessert, which is: help me to entertain two or three guests who are coming to me in the evening, to talk on literature, sup, and sleep; and to-morrow you shall return home, and see Lady Flora in the drawing-room if you cannot in the boudoir."

And Clarence was easily persuaded to accept the invitation.

Talbot was not one of those men who are forced to exert themselves to be entertaining. He had the pleasant and easy way of imparting his great general and curious information, that a man, partly humourist, partly philosopher, who values himself on being a man of letters, and is in spite of himself a man of the world, always ought to possess. Clarence was soon beguiled from the remembrance of his mortifications, and, by little and little, entirely yielded to the airy and happy flow of Talbot's conversation.

In the evening, three or four men of literary eminence (as many as Talbot's small Tusculum would accommodate with beds) arrived, and in a conversation, free alike from the jargon of pedants and the insipidities of fashion, the night fled away swiftly and happily, even to the lover.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

We are here (in the country) among the vast and noble scenes of nature; we are there (in the town) among the pitiful shifts of policy. We walk here in the light and open ways of the divine bounty—we grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice; our senses are here feasted with all the clear and genuine taste of their objects, which are all sophisticated there, and for the most part overwhelmed with their contraries: here pleasure, methinks, looks like a beautiful, constant, and modest wife: it is there an impudent, fickle, and painted harlot.—Cowley.

Draw up the curtain! The scene is the Opera.

The pit is crowded; the connoisseurs in the front row are in a very ill-humour. It must be confessed that extreme heat is a little trying to the temper of a critic.

The Opera then was not what it is now, nor even what it had been in a former time. It is somewhat amusing to find Goldsmith questioning, in one of his essays, whether the Opera could ever become popular in England? But on the night on which the reader is summoned to that "theatre of sweet sounds" a celebrated singer from the Continent

made his first appearance in London, and all the world thronged to "that odious Opera-house," to hear, or to say they had heard, the famous Sopraniello.

With a nervous step, Clarence proceeded to Lady Westborough's box; and it was many minutes that he lingered by the door before he summoned courage to obtain admission.

He entered; the box was crowded; but Lady Flora was not there. Lord Borodaile was sitting next to Lady Westborough. As Clarence entered, Lord Borodaile raised his eyebrows, and Lady Westborough her glass. However disposed a great person may be to drop a lesser one, no one of real birth or breeding ever cuts another. Lady Westborough, therefore, though much colder, was no less civil than usual; and Lord Borodaile bowed lower than ever to *Mr.* Linden, as he punctiliously called him. But Clarence's quick eye discovered instantly that he was no welcome intruder, and that his day with the beautiful marchioness was over. His visit, consequently, was short and embarrassed. When he left the box, he heard Lord Borodaile's short slow, sneering laugh, followed by Lady Westborough's "hush" of reproof.

His blood boiled. He hurried along the passage, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and his hand clenched.

"What ho! Linden, my good fellow; why, you look as if all the ferocity of the great Figg were in your veins," cried a good-humoured voice. Clarence started, and saw the young and high-spirited Duke of Haverfield.

"Are you going behind the scenes?" said his grace. "I have just come thence; and you had much better drop into La Meronville's box with me. You sup with her to-night, do you not?"

"No, indeed!" replied Clarence; "I scarcely know her, except by sight."

"Well, and what think you of her?"

"That she is the prettiest Frenchwoman I ever saw."

"Commend me to secret sympathies!" cried the duke.

"She has asked me three times who you were, and told me three times you were the handsomest man in London, and had quite a foreign air; the latter recommendation being of course far greater than the former. So, after this, you cannot refuse to accompany me to her box, and make her acquaintance."

"Nay," answered Clarence, "I shall be too happy to profit by the taste of so discerning a person: but it is cruel in you, duke, not to feign a little jealousy—a little reluctance to introduce so formidable a rival."

"Oh, as to me," said the duke, "I only like her for her mental, not her personal, attractions. She is very agreeable, and a little witty; sufficient attractions for one in her situation."

"But do tell me a little of her history," said Clarence; "for, in spite of her renown, I only know her as La belle Meronville. Is she not living *en ami* with some one of our acquaintance?"

"To be sure," replied the duke, "with Lord Borodaile. She is prodigiously extravagant; and Borodaile affects to be prodigiously fond; but as there is only a certain fund of affection in the human heart, and all Lord Borodaile's is centred *in* Lord Borodaile, that cannot really be the case."

"Is he jealous of her," said Clarence.

"Not in the least! nor indeed, does she give him any cause. She is very gay, very talkative, gives excellent suppers, and always has her box at the Opera crowded with admirers; but that is all. She encourages many, and favours but one. Happy Borodaile! My lot is less fortunate! You know, I suppose, that Julia has deserted me?"

"You astonish me—and for what?"

"Oh, she told me, with a vehement burst of tears, that she was convinced I did not love her, and that a hundred pounds a month was not sufficient to maintain a milliner's apprentice. I answered the first assertion by an assurance

that I adored her; but I preserved a total silence with regard to the latter: and so I found Trevanion *tête-à-tête* with her the next day."

"What did you?" said Clarence.

"Sent my valet to Trevanion with an old coat of mine, my compliments, and my hopes that, as Mr. Trevanion was so fond of my cast-off conveniences, he would honour me by accepting the accompanying trifle."

"He challenged you, without doubt?"

"Challenged me! No: he tells all his friends that I am the wittiest man in Europe."

"A fool can speak the truth, you see," said Clarence, laughing.

"Thank you, Linden; you shall have my good word with La Meronville for that: *mais allons.*"

Mademoiselle *de* la Meronville, as she pointedly entitled herself, was one of those charming adventuresses, who, making the most of a good education, and a prepossessing person, a delicate turn for letter-writing, and a lively vein of conversation, came to England for a year or two, as Spaniards were wont to go to Mexico, and who return to their native country with a profound contempt for the barbarians whom they have so egregiously despoiled. Mademoiselle de la Meronville was small, beautifully formed, had the prettiest hands and feet in the world, and laughed *musically.* By the by, how difficult it is to laugh, or even to smile, at once naturally and gracefully! It is one of Steele's finest touches of character, where he says of Will Honeycombe, "He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily."

In a word, the pretty Frenchwoman was precisely formed to turn the head of a man like Lord Borodaile, who loved to be courted and who required to be amused. Mademoiselle de la Meronville received Clarence with a great deal of grace, and a little reserve, the first chiefly natural, the last wholly artificial.

"Well," said the duke (in French), "you have not told

me who are to be of your party this evening—Borodaile, I suppose, of course?"

"No, he cannot come to-night."

"*Ah, quel malheur!* then the hock will not be iced enough—Borodaile's looks are the best wine-coolers in the world."

"Fie!" cried La Meronville, glancing towards Clarence: "I cannot endure your malevolence; wit makes you very bitter."

"And that is exactly the reason why *La belle* Meronville loves me so: nothing is so sweet to one person as bitterness upon another; it is human nature and French nature (which is a very different thing) into the bargain."

"Bah! my lord duke, you judge of others by yourself."

"To be sure I do," cried the duke; "and that is the best way of forming a right judgment. Ah! what a foot that little *figurante* has—you don't admire her, Linden?"

"No, duke; my admiration is like the bird in the cage—chained here, and cannot fly away!" answered Clarence, with a smile at the frippery of his compliment.

"Ah, Monsieur," cried the pretty Frenchwoman, leaning back, "you have been at Paris, I see—one does not learn those graces of language in England. I have been five months in your country—brought over the prettiest dresses imaginable, and have only received three compliments, and (pity me!) two out of the three were upon my pronunciation of 'How do you do?"

"Well," said Clarence, "I should have imagined that in England, above all other countries, your vanity would have been gratified, for you know we pique ourselves on our sincerity, and say all we think."

"Yes? then you always think very unpleasantly. What an alternative! which is the best, to speak ill, or to think ill of one?"

"*Pour l'amour de Dieu,*" cried the duke, "don't ask such puzzling questions; you are always getting into those moral subtleties, which I suppose you learn from Borodaile. He

is a wonderful metaphysician, I hear—I can answer for his chemical powers; the moment he enters a room the very walls grow damp: as for me I dissolve; I should flow into a fountain, like Arethusa, if happily his lordship did not freeze one again into substance as fast as he dampens one into thaw."

"*Fi donc!*" cried La Meronville. "I should be very angry had you not taught me to be very indifferent—"

"*To him!*" said the duke, drily. "I'm glad to hear it. He is not worth *une grande passion*, believe me—but tell me, *ma belle*, who else sups with you?"

"*D'abord*, Monsieur Linden, I trust," answered La Meronville, with a look of invitation, to which Clarence bowed and smiled his assent, "Milord D——, and Mons. Trevanion, Mademoiselle Caumartin, and Le Prince Pietro del Ordino."

"Nothing can be better arranged," said the duke. "But see, they are just going to drop the curtain. Let me call your carriage."

"You are too good, milord," replied La Meronville, with a bow which said, "of course;" and the duke, who would not have stirred three paces for the first princess of the blood, hurried out of the box (despite of Clarence's offer to undertake the commission) to inquire after the carriage of the most notorious adventuress of the day.

Clarence was alone in the box with the beautiful Frenchwoman. To say truth, Linden was far too much in love with Lady Flora, and too occupied, as to his other thoughts, with the projects of ambition, to be easily led into any disreputable or criminal *liaison;* he therefore conversed with his usual ease, though with rather more than his usual gallantry, without feeling the least touched by the charms of La Meronville, or the least desirous of supplanting Lord Borodaile in her favour.

The duke reappeared, and announced the carriage. As, with La Meronville leaning on his arm, Clarence hurried out, he accidentally looked up, and saw on the head of the

stairs Lady Westborough with her party (Lord Borodaile among the rest) in waiting for her carriage. For almost the first time in his life, Clarence felt ashamed of himself; his cheek burned like fire, and he involuntarily let go the fair hand which was leaning upon his arm. However, the weaker our course the better face we should put upon it, and Clarence, recovering his presence of mind, and vainly hoping he had not been perceived, buried his face as well as he was able in the fur collar of his cloak, and hurried on.

"You saw Lord Borodaile?" said the duke to La Meronville, as he handed her into her carriage.

"Yes, I accidentally looked back after we had passed him, and then I saw him."

"Looked back!" said the duke; "I wonder he did not turn you into a pillar of salt."

"*Fi donc!*" cried La belle Meronville, tapping his grace playfully on the arm, in order to which *she was forced to lean* a little harder upon Clarence's, which she had not yet relinquished—"*Fi donc!—Francois, chez moi!*"

"My carriage is just behind," said the duke. "You will go with me to La Meronville's, of course?"

"Really, my dear duke," said Clarence, "I wish I could excuse myself from this party. I have another engagement."

"Excuse yourself? and leave me to the mercy of Mademoiselle Caumartin, who has the face of an ostrich, and talks me out of breath! Never, my dear Linden, never! Besides, I want you to see how well I shall behave to Trevanion. Here is the carriage. *Entrez, mon cher.*"

And Clarence, weakly and foolishly (but he *was* very young and very unhappy, and so, longing for an escape from his own thoughts), entered the carriage, and drove to the supper party, in order to prevent the Duke of Haverfield being talked out of breath by Mademoiselle Caumartin, who had the face of an ostrich.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Yet truth is keenly sought for, and the wind
Charged with rich words, pour'd out in thought's defence;
Whether the Church inspire that eloquence,
Or a Platonic piety, confined
To the sole temple of the inward mind;
And one there is who builds immortal lays,
Though doom'd to tread in solitary ways;
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind!
Yet not alone——

WORDSWORTH.

LONDON—thou Niobe, who sittest in stone, amidst thy stricken and fated children; nurse of the desolate, that hidest in thy bosom the shame, the sorrows, the sins of many sons; in whose arms the fallen and the outcast shroud their distresses, and shelter from the proud man's contumely; Epitome and Focus of the disparities and maddening contrasts of this wrong world, that assemblest together in one great heap the woes, the joys, the elevations, the debasements of the various tribes of man; mightiest of levellers, confounding in thy whirlpool all ranks, all minds, the graven labours of knowledge, the straws of the maniac, purple and rags, the regalities and the loathsomeness of earth—palace and lazar-house combined! Grave of the living, where, mingled and massed together, we couch, but rest not—"for in that sleep *of life* what dreams *do* come"—each vexed with a separate vision—"shadows" which "grieve the heart," unreal in their substance, but faithful in their warnings, flitting from the eye, but graving unfleeting memories on the mind, which reproduce new dreams over and over, until the phantasm ceases, and the pall of a heavier torpor falls on the brain, and all is still, and dark, and hushed!—"From the stir of thy great Babel," which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays," we turn to thy deeper and more secret haunts. Thy wilderness is all

before us—where to choose our place of rest; and, to our eyes, thy hidden recesses are revealed.

The clock of St. Paul's has tolled the second hour of morning. Within a small and humble apartment in the very heart of the city, there sat a writer, whose lucubrations, then obscure and unknown, were destined, years afterwards, to excite the vague admiration of the crowd, and the deeper homage of the wise. They were of that nature which is slow in winning its way to popular esteem; the result of the hived and hoarded knowledge of years—the produce of deep thought and sublime aspirations, influencing, in its bearings, the interests of the many, yet only capable of analysis by the judgment of the few. But the stream broke forth at last from the cavern to the daylight, although *the source* was never traced; or, to change the image—albeit none know the hand which executed, and the head which designed—the monument of a mighty intellect has been at length dug up, as it were, from the envious earth, the brighter for its past obscurity, and the more certain of immortality from the temporary neglect it has sustained.

The room was, as we before said, very small and meanly furnished; yet were there a few articles of costliness and luxury scattered about, which told that the tastes of its owner had not been quite humbled to the level of his fortunes. One side of the narrow chamber was covered with shelves, which supported books, in various languages; and though chiefly on scientific subjects, not utterly confined to them. Among the doctrines of the philosopher, and the golden rules of the moralist, were also seen the pleasant dreams of poets, the legends of Spenser, the refining moralities of Pope, the lofty errors of Lucretius, and the sublime relics of *our* "dead kings of melody."[1] And over the hearth was a picture, taken in more prosperous days, of one, who had been, and was yet, to the tenant of that abode, better than fretted roofs and glittering banquets, the

[1] Shakspeare and Milton.

objects of ambition, or even the immortality of fame. It was the face of one very young and beautiful, and the deep, tender eyes looked down, as with a watchful fondness upon the lucubrator and his labours. While beneath the window, which was left unclosed, for it was scarcely June, were simple, yet not inelegant, vases, filled with flowers:

> Those lovely leaves, where we
> May read how soon things have
> Their end, though ne'er so brave.[1]

The writer was alone, and had just paused from his employment: he was leaning his face upon one hand, in a thoughtful and earnest mood, and the air which came chill, but gentle, from the window, slightly stirred the locks from the broad and marked brow, over which they fell in thin but graceful waves. Partly owing perhaps to the waning light of the single lamp, and the lateness of the hour, his cheek seemed very pale, and the complete, though contemplative, rest of the features partook greatly of the quiet of habitual sadness, and a little of the languor of shaken health: yet the expression, despite the proud caste of the brow and profile, was rather benevolent than stern or dark in its pensiveness, and the lines spoke more of the wear and harrow of deep thought, than the inroads of ill-regulated passion.

There was a slight tap at the door,—the latch was raised, and the original of the picture I have described entered the apartment.

Time had not been idle with her since that portrait had been taken; the round elastic figure had lost much of its youth and freshness; the step, though light, was languid, and in the centre of the fair, smooth cheek, which was a little sunken, burned one deep, bright spot—fatal sign to those who have watched the progress of the most deadly and deceitful of our national maladies; yet still the form and countenance were eminently interesting and lovely; and

[1] Herrick.

though the bloom was gone for ever, the beauty, which not even death could wholly have despoiled, remained to triumph over debility, misfortune, and disease.

She approached the student, and laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"Dearest!" said he tenderly yet reproachfully, "yet up, and the hour so late, and yourself so weak? Fie, I must learn to scold you."

"And how," answered the intruder, "how could I sleep or rest while you are consuming your very life in those thankless labours?"

"By which," interrupted the writer, with a faint smile, "we glean our scanty subsistence."

"Yes," said the wife (for she held that relation to the student), and the tears stood in her eyes, "I know well that every morsel of bread, every drop of water, is wrung from your very heart's blood, and I—I am the cause of all; but surely you exert yourself too much, more than can be requisite. These night damps, this sickly and chilling air, heavy with the rank vapours of the coming morning, are not suited to thoughts and toils which are alone sufficient to sear your mind and exhaust your strength. Come, my own love, to bed: and yet, first, come and look upon our child, how sound she sleeps! I have leant over her for the last hour, and tried to fancy it was you whom I watched, for she has learned already your smile, and has it even when she sleeps."

"She has cause to smile," said the husband, bitterly.

"She has, *for she is yours!* and even in poetry and humble hopes, that is an inheritance which may well teach her pride and joy. Come, love, the air is keen, and the damp rises to your forehead—yet stay, till I have kissed it away."

"Mine own love," said the student, as he rose and wound his arm round the slender waist of his wife, "wrap your shawl closer over your bosom, and let us look for one instant upon the night. I cannot sleep till I have slaked the

fever of my blood: the air has nothing of coldness in its breath for me."

And they walked to the window and looked forth. All was hushed and still in the narrow street; the cold grey clouds were hurrying fast along the sky, and the stars, weak and waning in their light, gleamed forth at rare intervals upon the mute city, like expiring watch-lamps of the dead.

They leaned out, and spoke not; but when they looked above upon the melancholy heavens, they drew nearer to each other, as if it were their natural instinct to do so, whenever the world without seemed discouraging and sad.

At length the student broke the silence; but his thoughts, which were wandering and disjointed, were breathed less to her than vaguely and unconsciously to himself. "Morn breaks—another and another!—day upon day!—while we drag on our load like the blind beast which knows not when the burden shall be cast off, and the hour of rest be come."

The woman pressed her hand to her bosom, but made no rejoinder—she knew his mood—and the student continued—

"And so life frets itself away! Four years have passed over our seclusion—four years! a great segment in the little circle of our mortality; and of those years what day has pleasure won from labour, or what night has sleep snatched wholly from the lamp? Weaker than the miser, the insatiable and restless mind traverses from east to west; and from the nooks, and corners, and crevices of earth collects, fragment by fragment, grain by grain, atom by atom, the riches which it gathers to its coffers—for what?—to starve amidst the plenty! The fantasies of the imagination bring a ready and substantial return: not so the treasures of thought. Better that I had renounced the soul's labour for that of its hardier frame—better that I had 'sweated in the eye of Phœbus,' than 'eat my heart with crosses and with cares,'—seeking truth and wanting bread—adding to the indigence of poverty its humiliation; wroth with the arrogance of men, who weigh in the shallow scales of their

meagre knowledge the product of lavish thought, and of the hard hours for which health, and sleep, and spirit have been exchanged;—sharing the lot of those who would enchant the old serpent of evil, which refuses the voice of the charmer!—struggling against the prejudice and bigoted delusion of the bandaged and fettered herd to whom, in our fond hopes and aspirations, we trusted to give light and freedom; seeing the slavish judgments we would have redeemed from error clashing their chains at us in ire;—made criminal by our very benevolence;—the martyrs whose zeal is rewarded with persecution, whose prophecies are crowned with contempt!—Better, oh, better that I had not listened to the vanity of a heated brain—better that I had made my home with the lark and the wild bee, among the fields and the quiet hills, where life, if obscurer, is less debased, and hope, if less eagerly indulged, is less bitterly disappointed. The frame, it is true, might have been bowed to a harsher labour, but the heart would at least have had its rest from anxiety, and the mind its relaxation from thought."

The wife's tears fell upon the hand she clasped. The student turned, and his heart smote him for the selfishness of his complaint. He drew her closer and closer to his bosom; and gazing fondly upon those eyes which years of indigence and care might have robbed of their young lustre, but not of their undying tenderness, he kissed away her tears, and addressed her in a voice which never failed to charm her grief into forgetfulness.

"Dearest and kindest," he said, "was I not to blame for accusing those privations or regrets which have only made us love each other the more? Trust me, mine own treasure, that it is only in the peevishness of an inconstant and fretful humour, that I have murmured against my fortune. For, in the midst of all, I look upon you, my angel, my comforter, my young dream of love, which God, in His mercy, breathed into waking life—I look upon you, and am blest and grateful. Nor in my juster moments do I accuse even the nature of these studies, though they bring

us so scanty a reward. Have I not hours of secret and overflowing delight, the triumphs of gratified research—flashes of sudden light, which reward the darkness of thought, and light up my solitude as a revel?—These feelings of rapture, which nought but Science can afford, amply repay her disciples for worse evils and severer hardships than it has been my destiny to endure. Look along the sky, how the vapours struggle with the still yet feeble stars: even so have the mists of error been pierced, though not scattered, by the dim but holy lights of past wisdom; and now the morning is at hand, and in that hope we journey on, doubtful, but not utterly in darkness. Nor is this *all my* hope; there *is* a loftier and more steady comfort than that which mere philosophy can bestow. If the certainty of future fame bore Milton rejoicing through his blindness, or cheered Galileo in his dungeon, what stronger and holier support shall not be given to *him* who has loved mankind as his brothers, and devoted his labours to their cause?—who has not sought, but relinquished, his own renown?—who has braved the present censures of men for their future benefit, and trampled upon glory in the energy of benevolence? Will there not be for him something more powerful than fame to comfort his sufferings and sustain his hopes? If the wish of mere posthumous honour be a feeling rather vain than exalted, the love of our race affords us a more rational and noble desire of remembrance. Come what will, that love, if it animates our toils, and directs our studies, shall, when we are dust, make our relics of value, our efforts of avail, and consecrate the desire of fame, which were else a passion selfish and impure, by connecting it with the welfare of ages, and the eternal interests of the world and its Creator!—Come, we will to bed."

CHAPTER XL.

A man may be formed by nature for an admirable citizen, and yet, from the purest motives, be a dangerous one to the State in which the accident of birth has placed him.—STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

THE night again closed, and the student once more resumed his labours. The spirit of his hope and comforter of his toils sat by him, ever and anon lifting her fond eyes from her work to gaze upon his countenance, to sigh, and to return sadly and quietly to her employment.

A heavy step ascended the stairs, the door opened, and the tall figure of Wolfe, the republican, presented itself. The female rose, pushed a chair towards him with a smile and grace suited to better fortunes, and, retiring from the table, reseated herself silent and apart.

"It is a fine night," said the student, when the mutual greetings were over. "Whence come you?"

"From contemplating human misery and worse than human degradation," replied Wolfe, slowly seating himself.

"Those words specify no place—they apply universally," said the student, with a sigh.

"Ay, Glendower, for misgovernment is universal," rejoined Wolfe.

Glendower made no answer.

"Oh!" said Wolfe, in the low, suppressed tone of intense passion which was customary to him, "it maddens me to look upon the willingness with which men hug their trappings of slavery,—bears, proud of the rags which deck, and the monkeys which ride them. But it frets me yet more when some lordling sweeps along, lifting his dull eyes above the fools whose only crime and debasement are—what?—their subjection to *him*. Such a one I encountered a few nights since; and he will remember the meeting longer than I shall. I taught that 'god to tremble.'"

The female rose, glanced towards her husband, and silently withdrew.

Wolfe paused for a few moments, looked curiously and pryingly round, and then rising went forth into the passage to see that no loiterer or listener was near—returned, and drawing his chair close to Glendower, fixed his dark eyes upon him, and said—

"You are poor, and your spirit rises against your lot; you are just, and your heart swells against the general oppression you behold; can you not dare to remedy your ills and those of mankind?"

"I can dare," said Glendower, calmly, though haughtily, "all things but crime."

"And which is crime?—the rising against, or the submission to, evil government? Which is crime, I ask you?"

"That which is the most imprudent," answered Glendower. "We may sport in ordinary cases with our own safeties, but only in rare cases with the safety of others."

Wolfe rose, and paced the narrow room impatiently to and fro. He paused by the window, and threw it open. "Come here," he cried—"come and look out."

Glendower did so—all was still and quiet.

"Why did you call me?" said he; "I see nothing."

"Nothing!" exclaimed Wolfe; "look again—look on yon sordid and squalid huts—look at yon court, that from this wretched street leads to abodes to which these are as palaces: look at yon victims of vice and famine, plying beneath the midnight skies their filthy and infectious trade. Wherever you turn your eyes, what see you? Misery, loathsomeness, sin! Are you a man, and call you these nothing? And now lean forth still more—see afar off, by yonder lamp, the mansion of ill-gotten and griping wealth. He who owns those buildings, what did he that he should riot while we starve? He wrung from the negro's tears and bloody sweat the luxuries of a pampered and vitiated taste: he pandered to the excesses of the rich; he heaped their tables with the product of a nation's groans. Lo!—

his reward! He is rich—prosperous—honoured! He sits in the legislative assembly; he declaims against immorality; he contends for the safety of property, and the equilibrium of ranks. Transport yourself from this spot for an instant—imagine that you survey the gorgeous homes of aristocracy and power—the palaces of the west. What see you there?—the few sucking, draining, exhausting the blood, the treasure, the very existence of the many. Are we, who are *of* the many, wise to suffer it?"

"Are we of the many?" said Glendower.

"We could be," said Wolfe, hastily.

"I doubt it," replied Glendower.

"Listen," said the republican, laying his hand upon Glendower's shoulder, "listen to me. There are in this country men whose spirits not years of delayed hope, wearisome persecution, and, bitterer than all, misrepresentation from some and contempt from others, have yet quelled and tamed. We watch our opportunity; the growing distress of the country, the increasing severity and misrule of the administration, will soon afford it us. Your talents, your benevolence, render you worthy to join us. Do so, and——"

"Hush!" interrupted the student; "you know not what you say: you weigh not the folly, the madness of your design! I am a man more fallen, more sunken, more disappointed than you. I, too, have had at my heart the burning and lonely hope which, through years of misfortune and want, has comforted me with the thought of serving and enlightening mankind—I, too, have devoted to the fulfilment of that hope, days and nights, in which the brain grew dizzy, and the heart heavy and clogged with the intensity of my pursuits. Were the dungeon and the scaffold my reward, Heaven knows that I would not flinch eye or hand, or abate a jot of heart and hope in the thankless prosecution of my toils. Know me, then, as one of fortunes more desperate than your own; of an ambition more unquenchable; of a philanthropy no less ardent; and, I

will add, of a courage no less firm: and behold the utter hopelessness of your project with others, when to me they only appear the visions of an enthusiast."

Wolfe sank down in the chair.

"Is it even so?" said he slowly and musingly. "Are my hopes but delusions?—Has my life been but one idle, though convulsive dream?—Is the goddess of our religion banished from this great and populous earth to the seared and barren hearts of a few solitary worshippers, whom all else despise as madmen or persecute as idolators?—And if so, shall we adore her the less?—No! though we perish in her cause, it is around her altar that our corpses shall be found!"

"My friend," said Glendower kindly, for he was touched by the sincerity, though opposed to the opinions of the republican, "the night is yet early: we will sit down to discuss our several doctrines calmly, and in the spirit of truth and investigation."

"Away!" cried Wolfe, rising and slouching his hat over his bent and lowering brows; "away! I will not listen to you—I dread your reasonings—I would not have a particle of my faith shaken. If I err, I have erred from my birth: erred with Brutus and Tell, Hampden and Milton, and all whom the thousand tribes and parties of earth consecrate with their common gratitude and eternal reverence. In that error I will die! If our party can struggle not with hosts, there may yet arise some minister with the ambition of Cæsar, if not his genius—of whom a single dagger can rid the earth!"

"And if not?" said Glendower.

"I have the same dagger for myself!" replied Wolfe, as he closed the door.

CHAPTER XLI.

Bolingbroke has said that "Man is his own sharper and his own bubble;" and certainly he who is acutest in duping others is ever the most ingenious in outwitting himself. The criminal is always a sophist; and finds in his own reason a special pleader to twist laws human and divine into a sanction of his crime. The rogue is so much in the habit of cheating, that he packs the cards even when playing at Patience with himself.—STEPHEN MONTAGUE.

THE only two acquaintances in this populous city whom Glendower possessed, who were aware that in a former time he had known a better fortune, were Wolfe, and a person of far higher worldly estimation, of the name of Crauford. With the former the student had become acquainted by the favour of chance, which had for a short time made them lodgers in the same house. Of the particulars of Glendower's earliest history, Wolfe was utterly ignorant; but the addresses upon some old letters, which he had accidentally seen, had informed him that Glendower had formerly borne another name; and it was easy to glean from the student's conversation that something of greater distinction and prosperity than he now enjoyed was coupled with the appellation he had renounced. Proud, melancholy, austere—brooding upon thoughts whose very loftiness received somewhat of additional grandeur from the gloom which encircled it—Glendower found, in the ruined hopes and the solitary lot of the republican, that congeniality which neither Wolfe's habits, nor the excess of his political fervour, might have afforded to a nature which philosophy had rendered moderate and early circumstances refined. Crauford was far better acquainted than Wolfe with the reverses Glendower had undergone. Many years ago he had known, and indeed travelled with, him upon the Continent; since then, they had not met till about six months prior to the time in which Glendower is presented to the reader. It was in an obscure street of the city, that Crauford had then

encountered Glendower, whose haunts were so little frequented by the higher orders of society that Crauford was the first, and the only one, of his former acquaintance, with whom for years he had been brought into contact. That person recognised him at once, accosted him, followed him home, and three days afterwards surprised him with a visit. Of manners which, in their dissimulation, extended far beyond the ordinary ease and breeding of the world, Crauford readily appeared not to notice the altered circumstances of his old acquaintance; and, by a tone of conversation artfully respectful, he endeavoured to remove from Glendower's mind that soreness which his knowledge of human nature told him his visit was calculated to create.

There is a certain species of pride which contradicts the ordinary symptoms of the feeling, and appears most elevated when it would be reasonable to expect it should be most depressed. Of this sort was Glendower's. When he received the guest who had known him in his former prosperity, some natural sentiment of emotion called, it is true, to his pale cheek a momentary flush, as he looked round his humble apartment, and the evident signs of poverty it contained; but his address was calm and self-possessed, and whatever mortification he might have felt, no intonation of his voice, no tell-tale embarrassment of manner, revealed it. Encouraged by this air, even while he was secretly vexed by it, and perfectly unable to do justice to the dignity of mind which gave something of majesty, rather than humiliation, to misfortune, Crauford resolved to repeat his visit, and by intervals, gradually lessening, renewed it, till acquaintance seemed, though little tinctured, at least on Glendower's side, by *friendship*, to assume the semblance of *intimacy*. It was true, however, that he had something to struggle against in Glendower's manner, which certainly grew colder in proportion to the repetition of the visits; and, at length, Glendower said, with an ease and quiet which abashed, for a moment, an effrontery of mind and manner, which was almost parallel—"Believe me, Mr.

Crauford, I feel fully sensible of your attentions; but as circumstances at present are such as to render an intercourse between us little congenial to the habits and sentiments of either, you will probably understand and forgive my motives in wishing no longer to receive civilities, which, however I may feel them, I am unable to return."

Crauford coloured, and hesitated, before he replied. "Forgive me then," said he, "for my fault. I did venture to hope that no circumstances would break off an acquaintance to me so valuable. Forgive me if I did imagine that an intercourse between mind and mind could be equally carried on, whether the mere body were lodged in a palace or a hovel;" and then, suddenly changing his tone into that of affectionate warmth, Crauford continued, "My dear Glendower, my dear friend, I would say, if I durst, is not your pride rather to blame here? Believe me, in my turn, I fully comprehend and bow to it; but it wounds me beyond expression. Were you in your proper station, a station much higher than my own, I would come to you at once, and proffer my friendship—as it is, I cannot; but your pride wrongs me, Glendower—indeed it does."

And Crauford turned away, apparently in the bitterness of wounded feeling.

Glendower was touched: and his nature, as kind as it was proud, immediately smote him for conduct certainly ungracious, and perhaps ungrateful. He held out his hand to Crauford; with the most respectful warmth, that personage seized and pressed it: and from that time Crauford's visits appeared to receive a licence which, if not perfectly welcome, was at least never again questioned.

"I shall have this man now," muttered Crauford, between his ground teeth, as he left the house, and took his way to his counting-house. There, cool, bland, fawning, and weaving in his close and dark mind various speculations of guilt and craft, he sat among his bills and gold, like the very gnome and personification of that Mammon of

gain to which he was the most supple, though concealed, adherent.

Richard Crauford was of a new, but not unimportant, family. His father had entered into commerce, and left a flourishing firm, and a name of great respectability in his profession, to his son. That son was a man whom many and opposite qualities rendered a character of very singular and uncommon stamp. Fond of the laborious acquisition of money, he was equally attached to the ostentatious pageantries of expense. Profoundly skilled in the calculating business of his profession, he was devoted equally to the luxuries of pleasure; but the pleasure was suited well to the mind which pursued it. The divine intoxication of that love where the delicacies and purities of affection consecrate the humanity of passion, was to him a thing of which not even his youngest imagination had ever dreamed. The social concomitants of the wine-cup—(which have for the lenient an excuse, for the austere a temptation)—the generous expanding of the heart—the increased yearning to kindly affection—the lavish spirit throwing off its exuberance in the thousand lights and emanations of wit—these, which have rendered the molten grape, despite of its excesses, not unworthy of the praises of immortal hymns, and taken harshness from the judgment of those averse to its enjoyment—these never presented an inducement to the stony temperament and dormant heart of Richard Crauford.

He looked upon the essences of things internal as the common eye upon outward nature, and loved the many shapes of evil as the latter does the varieties of earth, not for their graces, but their utility. His loves, coarse and low, fed their rank fires from an unmingled and gross depravity. His devotion to wine was either solitary and unseen—for he loved safety better than mirth—or in company with those whose station flattered his vanity, not whose fellowship ripened his crude and nipped affections. Even the recklessness of vice in him had the character of prudence; and, in the most rapid and turbulent stream of

his excesses, one might detect the rocky and unmoved heart of the calculator at the bottom.

Cool, sagacious, profound in dissimulation, and not only observant of, but deducing sage consequences from, those human inconsistencies and frailties by which it was his aim to profit, he cloaked his deeper vices with a masterly hypocrisy—and for those too dear to forego and too difficult to conceal, he obtained pardon by the intercession for virtues it cost him nothing to assume. Regular in his attendance at worship—professing rigidness of faith, beyond the tenets of the orthodox church—subscribing to the public charities, where the common eye knoweth what the private hand giveth—methodically constant to the forms of business—primitively scrupulous in the proprieties of speech—hospitable, at least to his superiors—and, being naturally smooth, both of temper and address, popular with his inferiors—it was no marvel that one part of the world forgave, to a man rich and young, the irregularities of dissipation—that another forgot real immorality in favour of affected religion—or that the remainder allowed the most unexceptional excellence of words to atone for the unobtrusive errors of a conduct which did not prejudice *them*.

"It is true," said his friends, "that he loves women too much: but he is young—he will marry and amend."

Mr. Crauford did *marry*—and, strange as it may seem, for love—at least for that brute-like love, of which alone he was capable. After a few years of ill-usage on his side, and endurance on his wife's, they parted. Tired of her person, and profiting by her gentleness of temper, he sent her to an obscure corner of the country, to starve upon the miserable pittance which was all he allowed her from his superfluities. Even then—such is the effect of the showy proprieties of form and word—Mr. Crauford sank not in the estimation of the world.

"It was easy to see," said the spectators of his domestic drama, "that a man in temper so mild—in his business so honourable—so civil of speech—so attentive to the stocks

and the sermon—could not have been the party to blame. One never knew the rights of matrimonial disagreements, nor could sufficiently estimate the provoking disparities of temper. Certainly Mrs. Crauford never did look in good humour, and had not the open countenance of her husband; and certainly the very excesses of Mr. Crauford betokened a generous warmth of heart, which the sullenness of his conjugal partner might easily chill and revolt."

And thus, unquestioned and unblamed, Mr. Crauford walked onward in his beaten way; and secretly laughing at the toleration of the crowd, continued at his luxurious villa, the orgies of a passionless, yet brutal, sensuality.

So far might the character of Richard Crauford find parallels in hypocrisy and success. Dive we now deeper into his soul. Possessed of talents which, though of a secondary rank, were in that rank consummate, Mr. Crauford could not be a villain by intuition, or the irregular bias of his nature: he was a villain upon a grander scale: he was a villain upon system. Having little learning and less knowledge, out of his profession, his reflection expended itself upon apparently obvious deductions from the great and mysterious book of life. He saw vice prosperous in externals, and from this sight his conclusion was drawn. "Vice," said he, "is not an obstacle to success; and if so, it is at least a pleasanter road to it than your narrow and thorny ways of virtue." But there are certain vices which require the mask of virtue, and Crauford thought it easier to wear the mask than to school his soul to the reality. So to the villain he added the hypocrite. He found the success equalled his hopes, for he had both craft and genius: nor was he, naturally, without the minor amiabilities, which, to the ignorance of the herd, seem more valuable than coin of a more important amount. Blinded as we are by prejudice, we not only *mistake* but *prefer* decencies to moralities; and, like the inhabitants of Cos, when offered the choice of two statues of the same goddess, we choose, not that which is the most beautiful, but that which is the most dressed.

Accustomed easily to dupe mankind, Crauford soon grew to despise them; and from justifying roguery by his own interest, he now justified it by the folly of others; and as no wretch is so unredeemed as to be without excuse to himself, Crauford actually persuaded his reason that he was vicious upon principle, and a rascal on a system of morality. But why the desire of this man, so consummately worldly and heartless, for an intimacy with the impoverished and powerless student? This question is easily answered. In the first place, during Crauford's acquaintance with Glendower abroad, the latter had often, though innocently, galled the vanity and self-pride of the *parvenu* affecting the aristocrat, and in poverty the *parvenu* was anxious to retaliate. But this desire would probably have passed away after he had satisfied his curiosity, or gloated his spite, by one or two insights into Glendower's home—for Crauford, though at times a malicious, was not a vindictive, man—had it not been for a much more powerful object which afterwards occurred to him. In an extensive scheme of fraud, which for many years this man had carried on, and which for secresy and boldness was almost unequalled, it had of late become necessary to his safety to have a partner, or rather tool. A man of education, talent, and courage, was indispensable, and Crauford had resolved that Glendower should be that man. With the supreme confidence in his own powers which long success had given him—with a sovereign contempt for, or rather disbelief in, human integrity—and with a thorough conviction that the bribe to him was the bribe with all, and that none would on any account be poor if they had the offer to be rich, Crauford did not bestow a moment's consideration upon the difficulty of his task, or conceive that in the nature and mind of Glendower there could exist any obstacle to his design.

Men addicted to calculation are accustomed to suppose those employed in the same mental pursuit arrive, or ought to arrive, at the same final conclusion. Now, looking upon

Glendower as a philosopher, Crauford looked upon him as a man who, however he might conceal his real opinions, secretly laughed, like Crauford's self, not only at the established customs, but at the established moralities of the world. Ill-acquainted with books, the worthy Richard was, like all men similarly situated, somewhat infected by the very prejudices he affected to despise; and he shared the vulgar disposition to doubt the hearts of those who cultivate the head. Glendower himself had confirmed this opinion by lauding, though he did not entirely subscribe to, those moralists who have made an enlightened self-interest the proper measure of all human conduct; and Crauford, utterly unable to comprehend this system in its grand, naturally interpreted it in a partial, sense. Espousing self-interest as his own code, he deemed that in reality Glendower's principles did not differ greatly from his; and as there is no pleasure to a hypocrite like that of finding a fit opportunity to unburden some of his real sentiments, Crauford was occasionally wont to hold some conference and argument with the student, in which his opinions were not utterly cloaked in their usual disguise; but cautious even in his candour, he always forbore stating such opinions as his own: he merely mentioned them as those which a man beholding the villainies and follies of his kind, might be tempted to form; and thus Glendower, though not greatly esteeming his acquaintance, looked upon him as one ignorant in his opinions but not likely to err in his conduct.

These conversations did, however, it is true, increase Crauford's estimate of Glendower's integrity, but they by no means diminished his confidence of subduing it. Honour, a deep and pure sense of the divinity of good, the steady desire of rectitude, and the supporting aid of a sincere religion—these he did not deny to his intended tool; he rather rejoiced that he possessed them. With the profound arrogance, the sense of immeasurable superiority which men of no principle invariably feel for those who have it, Crauford said to himself, "Those very virtues will

be my best dupes—they cannot resist the temptations I shall offer, but they can resist any offer to betray me afterwards, for no man can resist hunger; but your fine feelings, your nice honour, your precise religion—he! he! he—these can teach a man very well to resist a common inducement: they cannot make him submit to be his own executioner; but they can prevent his turning king's evidence, and being executioner to another. No, no—it is not to your common rogues that I may dare trust my secret—*my* secret, which is my life! It is precisely of such a fine, Athenian, moral rogue as I shall make my proud friend, that I am in want. But he has some silly scruples; we must beat them away—we must not be too rash; and above all, we must leave the best argument to poverty. Want is your finest orator;—a starving wife—a famished brat! he! he! these are your true tempters, your true fathers of crime, and fillers of gaols and gibbets. Let me see: he has no money I know, but what he gets from that bookseller. What bookseller, by the by? Ah, rare thought! I'll find out, and cut off that supply. My lady wife's cheek will look somewhat thinner next month, I fancy, he! he! But 'tis a pity, for she is a glorious creature! Who knows but I may serve two purposes? However, one at present! business first and pleasure afterwards—and faith, the business is damnably like that of life and death."

Muttering such thoughts as these, Crauford took his way one evening to Glendower's house.

CHAPTER XLII.

Iago.—Virtue; a fig—'tis in ourselves that we are thus and thus.
—*Othello.*

"So—so, my little one, don't let me disturb you. Madam, dare I venture to hope your acceptance of this fruit? I chose it myself, and I am somewhat of a judge. Oh! Glendower, here is the pamphlet you wished to see."

With this salutation, Crauford drew his chair to the table by which Glendower sate, and entered into conversation with his purposed victim. A comely and a pleasing countenance had Richard Crauford! the lonely light of the room fell upon a face which, though forty years of guile had gone over it, was as fair and unwrinkled as a boy's. Small, well-cut features—a blooming complexion—eyes of the lightest blue—a forehead high, though narrow, and a mouth from which the smile was never absent; these, joined to a manner at once soft and confident, and an elegant, though unaffected, study of dress, gave to Crauford a personal appearance well suited to aid the effect of its hypocritical and dissembling mind.

"Well, my friend," said he, "always at your books—eh! Ah! it is a happy taste; would that I had cultivated it more; but we who are condemned to business have little leisure to follow our own inclinations. It is only on Sundays that I have time to read; and then (to say truth I am an old-fashioned man, whom the gayer part of the world laughs at), and then I am too occupied with the Book of Books to think of any less important study."

Not deeming that a peculiar reply was required to this pious speech, Glendower did not take that advantage of Crauford's pause which it was evidently intended that he should. With a glance towards the student's wife, our mercantile friend continued: "I did once—once in my young dreams, intend—that whenever I married I would relinquish a profession for which, after all, I am but little calculated. I pictured to myself a country retreat, well stored with books; and having concentrated in one home all the attractions which could have tempted my thoughts abroad, I had designed to surrender myself solely to those studies which, I lament to say, were but ill-attended to in my earlier education. But—but,"—(here Mr. Crauford sighed deeply, and averted his face)—"fate willed it otherwise!"

Whatever reply of sympathetic admiration or condolence

Glendower might have made, was interrupted by one of those sudden and overpowering attacks of faintness which had of late seized the delicate and declining health of his wife. He rose, and leant over her with a fondness and alarm which curled the lip of his visitor.

"Thus it is," said Crauford to himself, "with weak minds, under the influence of habit. The love of lust becomes the love of custom, and the last is as strong as the first."

When she had recovered, she rose, and (with her child) retired to rest, the only restorative she ever found effectual for her complaint. Glendower went with her, and, after having seen her eyes, which swam with tears of gratitude at his love, close in the seeming slumber she affected in order to release him from his watch, he returned to Crauford. He found that gentleman leaning against the chimney-piece with folded arms, and apparently immersed in thought. A very good opportunity had Glendower's absence afforded to a man whose boast it was never to lose one. Looking over the papers on the table, he had seen and possessed himself of the address of the bookseller the student dealt with. "So much for business—now for philanthropy," said Mr. Crauford, in his favorite antithetical phrase, throwing himself in his attitude against the chimney-piece.

As Glendower entered, Crauford started from his reverie, and with a melancholy air and pensive voice, said—

"Alas, my friend, when I look upon this humble apartment, and the weak health of your unequalled wife—your obscurity—your misfortunes; when I look upon these, and contrast them with your mind, your talents, and all that you were born and fitted for, I cannot but feel tempted to believe with those who imagine the pursuit of virtue a chimera, and who justify their own worldly policy by the example of all of their kind."

"Virtue," said Glendower, "would indeed be a chimera, did it require support from those whom you have cited."

"True—most true," answered Crauford, somewhat disconcerted in reality, though not in appearance; "and yet, strange as it may seem, I have known some of those persons very good, admirably good men. They were extremely moral and religious; they only played the great game for worldly advantage upon the same terms as the other players; nay, they never made a move in it without most fervently and sincerely praying for divine assistance."

"I readily believe you," said Glendower, who always, if possible, avoided a controversy—"the easiest person to deceive is one's own self."

"Admirably said," answered Crauford, who thought it, nevertheless, one of the most foolish observations he had ever heard, "admirably said!—and yet my heart does grieve bitterly for the trials and distresses it surveys. One must make excuses for poor human frailty; and one is often placed in such circumstances as to render it scarcely possible, without the grace of God"—(here Crauford lifted up his eyes)—"not to be urged, as it were, into the reasonings and actions of the world."

Not exactly comprehending this observation, and not very closely attending to it, Glendower merely bowed, as in assent, and Crauford continued.

"I remember a remarkable instance of this truth. One of my partner's clerks had, through misfortune or imprudence, fallen into the greatest distress. His wife, his children—(he had a numerous family)—were on the literal and absolute verge of starvation. Another clerk, taking advantage of these circumstances, communicated to the distressed man a plan for defrauding his employer. The poor fellow yielded to the temptation, and was at last discovered. I spoke to him myself, for I was interested in his fate, and had always esteemed him. 'What,' said I, 'was your motive for this fraud?' 'My duty!' answered the man fervently; 'my duty! Was I to suffer my wife, my children, to starve before my face, when I could save them at a little personal risk? No—my duty forbade it!'- and

in truth, Glendower, there was something very plausible in this mannner of puttting the question."

"You might, in answering it," said Glendower, "have put the point in a manner equally plausible, and more true: was he to commit a great crime against the millions connected by social order, for the sake of serving a single family—and that his own?"

"Quite right," answered Crauford: "that was just the point of view in which I did put it; but the man, who was something of a reasoner, replied, 'Public law is instituted for public happiness. Now if *mine* and my children's happiness is infinitely and immeasurably more served by this comparatively petty fraud than my employer's is advanced by my abstaining from, or injured by my committing it, why, the origin of law itself allows me to do it.' What say you to that, Glendower? It is something in your Utilitarian, or, as you term it, Epicurean[1] principle; is it not?" and Crauford shading his eyes, as if from the light, watched narrowly Glendower's countenance, while he concealed his own.

"Poor fool!" said Glendower; "the man was ignorant of the first lesson in his moral primer. Did he not know that no rule is to be applied to a peculiar instance, but extended to its most general bearings? Is it necessary even to observe that the particular consequence of fraud in this man might, it is true, be but ridding his employer of superfluities, scarcely missed, for the relief of most urgent want in two or three individuals; but the general consequences of fraud and treachery would be the disorganization of all society? Do not think, therefore, that this man was a disciple of my, or of any, system of morality."

"It is very just, very," said Mr. Crauford, with a benevolent sigh; "but you will own that want seldom allows great

[1] See the article on Mr. Moore's *Epicurean* in the *Westminster Review*. Though the strictures on that work are harsh and unjust, yet the part relating to the real philosophy of Epicurus is one of the most masterly things in criticism.

nicety in moral distinctions, and that, when those whom you love most in the world are starving, you may be pitied, if not forgiven, for losing sight of the after laws of nature, and recurring to her first ordinance, self-preservation."

"We should be harsh, indeed," answered Glendower, "if we did not pity; or, even while the law condemned, if the individual did not forgive."

"So I said, so I said," cried Crauford; "and in interceding for the poor fellow, whose pardon I am happy to say I procured, I could not help declaring, that if I were placed in the same circumstances, I am not sure that my crime would not have been the same."

"No man *could* feel sure!" said Glendower, dejectedly.

Delighted and surprised with this confession, Crauford continued:—"I believe—I fear not;—thank God, *our* virtue can never be so tried; but even you, Glendower, even *you*, philosopher, moralist as you are—just, good, wise, religious—even you might be tempted, if you saw your angel wife dying for want of the aid, the very sustenance, necessary to existence, and your innocent and beautiful daughter stretch her little hands to you, and cry in the accents of famine for bread."

The student made no reply for a few moments, but averted his countenance, and then in a slow tone said, "Let us drop this subject: none know their strength till they are tried: self-confidence should accompany virtue, but not precede it."

A momentary flash broke from the usually calm, cold eye of Richard Crauford. "He is mine," thought he: "the very name of want abases his pride: what will the reality do? O human nature, how I know and mock thee!"

"You are right," said Crauford, aloud; "let us talk of the pamphlet."

And after a short conversation upon indifferent subjects, the visitor departed. Early the next morning was Mr. Crauford seen on foot, taking his way to the bookseller

whose address he had learnt. The bookseller was known as a man of a strongly evangelical bias. "We must insinuate a lie or two," said Crauford, inly, "about Glendower's principles. He! he! it will be a fine stroke of genius to make the upright tradesman suffer Glendower to starve, out of a principle of religion. But who would have thought my prey had been so easily snared?—why, if I had proposed the matter last night, I verily think he would have agreed to it."

Amusing himself with these thoughts, Crauford arrived at the bookseller's. There he found Fate had saved him from one crime at least. The whole house was in confusion—the bookseller had that morning died of an apoplectic fit.

"Good God! how shocking!" said Crauford to the foreman; "but he was a most worthy man, and Providence could no longer spare him. The ways of Heaven are inscrutable! Oblige me with three copies of that precious tract termed the '*Divine Call.*' I should like to be allowed permission to attend the funeral of so excellent a man. Good-morning, sir—Alas! alas!" and shaking his head piteously, Mr. Crauford left the shop.

"Hurra!" said he, almost audibly, when he was once more in the street, "hurra! my victim is made, my game is won—death or the devil fights for me. But, hold—there are other booksellers in this monstrous city!—ay, but not above two or three in our philosopher's way. I must forestall him there—so, so—that is soon settled. Now, then, I must leave him a little while undisturbed, to his fate. Perhaps my next visit may be to him in gaol; your debtor's side of the Fleet is almost as good a pleader as an empty stomach—he! he! he!—but the stroke must be made soon, for time presses, and this d—d business spreads so fast that if I don't have a speedy help, it will be too much for my hands, griping as they are. However, if it holds on a year longer, I will change my seat in the lower House for one in the upper; twenty thousand pounds to the

minister may make a merchant a very pretty peer. O brave Richard Crauford, wise Richard Crauford, fortunate Richard Crauford, *noble* Richard Crauford! Why, if thou art ever hanged, it will be by a jury of *peers*. 'Gad, the rope would then have a dignity in it, instead of disgrace. But stay, here comes the Dean of ——; not orthodox, it is said—rigid Calvinist!—out with the '*Divine Call!*' "

When Mr. Richard Crauford repaired next to Glendower, what was his astonishment and dismay at hearing he had left his home, none knew whither, nor could give the inquirer the slightest clue.

"How long has he left?" said Crauford to the landlady.

"Five days, sir."

"And will he not return to settle any little debts he may have incurred?" said Crauford.

"Oh, no, sir—he paid them all before he went. Poor gentleman—for though he was poor, he was the finest and most thorough gentleman I ever saw!—my heart bled for him. They parted with all their valuables to discharge their debts: the books, and instruments, and busts—all went; and what I saw, though he spoke so indifferently about it, hurt him the most—he sold even the lady's picture. 'Mrs. Croftson,' said he, 'Mr. ——, the painter, will send for that picture the day after I leave you. See that he has it, and that the greatest care is taken of it in delivery.' "

"And you cannot even guess where he has gone to?"

"No, sir; a single porter was sufficient to convey his remaining goods, and he took him from some distant part of the town."

"Ten thousand devils!" muttered Crauford, as he turned away; "I should have foreseen this! He is lost now. Of course he will again change his name; and in the d—d holes and corners of this gigantic puzzle of houses, how shall I ever find him out?—and time presses too! Well, well, well! there is a fine prize for being cleverer, or, as fools would say, more rascally than others; but there is a

world of trouble in winning it. But come—I will go home, lock myself up, and get drunk! I am as melancholy as a cat in love, and about as stupid: and, faith, one must get spirits in order to hit on a new invention. But if there be consistency in fortune, or success in perseverance, or wit in Richard Crauford, that man shall yet be my victim—and preserver!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

Revenge is now the cud
That I do chew.—I'll challenge him.
BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

WE return to "the world of fashion," as the admirers of the polite novel of —— would say. The noon-day sun broke hot and sultry through half-closed curtains of roseate silk, playing in broken beams upon rare and fragrant exotics, which cast the perfumes of southern summers over a chamber, moderate, indeed, as to its dimensions, but decorated with a splendour rather gaudy than graceful, and indicating much more a passion for luxury than a refinement of taste.

At a small writing-table sat the beautiful La Meronville. She had just finished a note, written (how Jean Jacques would have been enchanted) upon paper *couleur de rose*, with a mother-of-pearl pen, formed as one of Cupid's darts, dipped into an inkstand of the same material, which was shaped as a quiver, and placed at the back of a little Love, exquisitely wrought. She was folding this billet, when a page, fantastically dressed, entered, and, announcing Lord Borodaile, was immediately followed by that nobleman. Eagerly and almost blushingly did La Meronville thrust the note into her bosom, and hasten to greet and to embrace her adorer. Lord Borodaile flung himself on one of the sofas with a listless and discontented air. The experienced Frenchwoman saw that there was a cloud on his brow.

"My dear friend," said she, in her own tongue, "you seem vexed—has anything annoyed you?"

"No, Cecile, no. By the by, who supped with you last night?"

"Oh! the Duke of Haverfield—your friend."

"My friend!" interrupted Borodaile haughtily—"he's no friend of mine—a vulgar talkative fellow—my friend, indeed!"

"Well, I beg your pardon: then there was Mademoiselle Caumartin, and the prince Pietro del Orbino, and Mr. Trevanion, and Mr. Lin—Lin—Linten, or Linden."

"And pray, will you allow me to ask how you became acquainted with Mr. Lin—Lin—Linten, or Linden?"

"Assuredly—through the Duke of Haverfield."

"Humph—Cecile, my love, that young man is not fit to be the acquaintance of my friend—allow me to strike him from your list."

"Certainly, certainly!" said La Meronville, hastily: and stooping as if to pick up a fallen glove, though, in reality, to hide her face from Lord Borodaile's searching eye, the letter she had written fell from her bosom. Lord Borodaile's glance detected the superscription, and before La Meronville could regain the note, he had possessed himself of it.

"À Monsieur, Monsieur Linden!" said he, coldly, reading the address; "and, pray, how long have you corresponded with that gentleman?"

Now La Meronville's situation at that moment was by no means agreeable. She saw at one glance that no falsehood or artifice could avail her; for Lord Borodaile might deem himself fully justified in reading the note, which would contradict any glossing statement she might make. She saw this. She was a woman of independence—cared not a straw for Lord Borodaile at present, though she *had* had a caprice for him—knew that she might choose her *bon ami* out of all London, and replied—

"That is the first letter I ever wrote to him; but I own that it will not be the last."

Lord Borodaile turned pale.

"And will you suffer me to read it?" said he; for even in these cases he was punctiliously honourable.

La Meronville hesitated. She did not know him. "If I do not consent," thought she, "he will do it without the consent: better submit with a good grace."—"Certainly!" she answered, with an air of indifference.

Borodaile opened and read the note; it was as follows:—

"You have inspired me with a feeling for you which astonishes myself. Ah, why should that love be the strongest which is the swiftest in its growth? I used to love Lord Borodaile—I now only esteem him—the love has flown to you. If I judge rightly from your words and your eyes, this avowal will not be unwelcome to you. Come and assure me, in person, of a persuasion so dear to my heart. C. L. M."

"A very pretty effusion!" said Lord Borodaile, sarcastically, and only showing his inward rage by the increasing paleness of his complexion, and a slight compression of his lip. "I thank you for your confidence in me. All I ask is, that you will not send this note till to-morrow. Allow me to take my leave of you first, and to find in Mr. Linden a successor rather than a rival."

"Your request, my friend," said La Meronville, adjusting her hair, "is but reasonable. I see that you understand these arrangements; and, for my part, I think that the end of love should always be the beginning of friendship—let it be so with us!"

"You do me too much honour," said Borodaile, bowing profoundly. "Meanwhile I depend upon your promise, and bid you, as a lover, farewell for ever."

With his usual slow step Lord Borodaile descended the stairs, and walked towards the central *quartier* of town. His meditations were of no soothing nature. "To be seen by that man in a ridiculous and degrading situation—to be

pestered with his d--d civility—to be rivalled by him with Lady Flora—to be duped and outdone by him with my mistress! Ay, all this have I been; but vengeance shall come yet. As for La Meronville, the loss is a gain; and, thank Heaven, I did not betray myself by venting my passion and making a scene. But it was I who ought to have discarded her—not the reverse—and—death and confusion—for that upstart, above all men! And she talked in her letter about his eyes and words. Insolent coxcomb, to dare to have eyes and words for one who belonged to me. Well, well, he shall smart for this. But let me consider—I must not play the jealous fool—must not fight for a ——; must not show the world that a man, nobody knows who, could really outwit and outdo *me*—me—Francis Borodaile!—No, no—I must throw the insult upon him—must myself be the aggressor—and the challenged; then, too, I shall have the choice of weapons, pistols of course. Where shall I hit him, by the by?—I wish I shot as well as I used to do at Naples. I was in full practice then. Cursed place, where there was nothing else to do but to practice!"

Immersed in these, or somewhat similar, reflections did Lord Borodaile enter Pall Mall.

"Ah, Borodaile!" said Lord St. George, suddenly emerging from a shop. "This is really fortunate—you are going my way exactly—allow me to join you."

Now Lord Borodaile, to say nothing of his happening at that time to be in a mood more than usually unsocial, could never at *any* time bear the thought of being made an instrument of convenience, pleasure, or good fortune to another. He therefore, with a little resentment at Lord St. George's familiarity, coldly replied, "I am sorry that I cannot avail myself of your offer. I am sure my way is *not* the same as yours."

"Then," replied Lord St. George, who was a good-natured, indolent man, who imagined everybody was as averse to walking alone as he was—"then I will make *mine* the same as yours."

Borodaile coloured: though always uncivil, he did not like to be excelled in good manners; and therefore replied, that nothing but extreme business at White's could have induced him to prefer his own way to that of Lord St. George.

The good-natured peer took Lord Borodaile's arm. It was a natural incident, but it vexed the punctilious viscount that any man should *take*, not *offer*, the support.

"So, they say," observed Lord St. George, "that young Linden is to marry Lady Flora Ardenne."

"*Les on-dits font la gazette des fous,*" rejoined Borodaile with a sneer. "I believe that Lady Flora is little likely to contract such a *mésalliance.*"

"*Mésalliance!*" replied Lord St. George. "I thought Linden was of a very old family, which you know the Westboroughs are not, and he has great expectations—"

"Which are never to be realised," interrupted Borodaile, laughing scornfully.

"Ah, indeed!" said Lord St. George, seriously. "Well, at all events he is a very agreeable, unaffected young man, —and, by the by, Borodaile, you will meet him *chez moi* today—you know you dine with me?"

"Meet Mr. Linden! I shall be proud to have that honour," said Borodaile, with sparkling eyes; "will Lady Westborough be also of the party?"

"No, poor Lady St. George is very ill, and I have taken the opportunity to ask only men."

"You have done wisely, my lord," said Borodaile, *secum multa revolvens;* "and I assure you I wanted no hint to remind me of your invitation."

Here the Duke of Haverfield joined them. The duke never bowed to any one of the male sex; he therefore *nodded* to Borodaile, who, with a very supercilious formality, took off his hat in returning the salutation. The viscount had at least this merit in his pride,—that it was reserved to the humble, it was contemptuous to the high: his inferiors he wished to remain where they were; his equals he longed to lower.

"So I dine with you, Lord St. George, to-day," said the duke; "whom shall I meet?"

"Lord Borodaile, for one," answered St. George; "my brother, Aspeden, Findlater, Orbino, and Linden."

"Linden!" cried the duke; "I'm very glad to hear it, *c'est un homme fait exprès pour moi.* He is very clever, and not above playing the fool; has humour without setting up for a wit, and is a good fellow without being a bad man. I like him excessively."

"Lord St. George," said Borodaile, who seemed that day to be the very martyr of the unconscious Clarence, "I wish you good-morning. I have only just remembered an engagement which I *must* keep before I go to White's."

And with a bow to the duke, and a remonstrance from Lord St. George, Borodaile effected his escape. His complexion was, insensibly to himself, more raised than usual, his step more stately; his mind, for the first time for years, was fully excited and engrossed. Ah, what a delightful thing it is for an idle man, who has been dying of *ennui*, to find an enemy!

CHAPTER XLIV.

> You must challenge him;
> There's no avoiding—one or both must drop.
>
> BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

"HA, ha, ha—bravo, Linden!" cried Lord St. George, from the head of his splendid board, in approbation of some witticism of Clarence's; and ha, ha, ha! or he, he, he! according to the cachinnatory intonations of the guests rang around.

"Your lordship seems unwell," said Lord Aspeden to Borodaile; "allow me to take wine with you."

Lord Borodaile bowed his assent.

"Pray," said Mr. St. George to Clarence, "have you seen my friend Talbot lately?"

"This very morning," replied Linden: "indeed, I generally visit him three or four times a week—he often asks after you."

"Indeed!" said Mr. St. George, rather flattered; "he does me much honour; but he is a distant connection of mine, and I suppose I must attribute his recollection of me to that cause. He is a near relation of yours too, I think—is he not?"

"I *am* related to him," answered Clarence, colouring.

Lord Borodaile leaned forward, and his lip curled. Though, in some respects, a very unamiable man, he had—as we have said, his good points. He hated a lie as much as Achilles did; and he believed in his heart of hearts that Clarence had just uttered one.

"Why," observed Lord Aspeden, "why, Lord Borodaile, the Talbots of Scarsdale are branches of *your* genealogical tree; therefore your lordship must be related to Linden; you are 'two cherries on one stalk!'"

"We are by no means related," said Lord Borodaile, with a distinct and clear voice, intended expressly for Clarence; "that is an honour which I must beg leave most positively to disclaim."

There was a dead silence—the eyes of all who heard a remark so intentionally rude were turned immediately towards Clarence. His cheek burned like fire; he hesitated a moment, and then said, in the same key, though with a little trembling in his intonation—

"Lord Borodaile cannot be more anxious to disclaim it than I am."

"And yet," returned the viscount, stung to the soul, "they who advance false pretensions ought at least to support them!"

"I do not understand you my lord," said Clarence.

"Possibly not," answered Borodaile, carelessly: "there is a maxim which says that people not accustomed to speak truth cannot comprehend it in others."

Unlike the generality of modern heroes, who are always

in a passion—off-hand, dashing fellows, in whom irascibility is a virtue—Clarence was peculiarly sweet-tempered by nature, and had, by habit, acquired a command over all his passions to a degree very uncommon in so young a man. He made no reply to the inexcusable affront he had received. His lip quivered a little, and the flush of his countenance was succeeded by an extreme paleness—this was all: he did not even leave the room immediately, but waited till the silence was broken by some well-bred member of the party; and then, pleading an early engagement as an excuse for his retiring so soon, he rose, and departed.

There was throughout the room a universal feeling of sympathy with the affront, and indignation against the offender; for, to say nothing of Clarence's popularity, and the extreme dislike in which Lord Borodaile was held, there could be no doubt as to the wantonness of the outrage, or the moderation of the aggrieved party. Lord Borodaile already felt the punishment of his offence: his very pride, while it rendered him indifferent to the spirit, had hitherto kept him scrupulous as to the formalities of social politeness; and he could not but see the grossness with which he had suffered himself to violate them, and the light in which his conduct was regarded. However, this internal discomfort only rendered him the more embittered against Clarence, and the more confirmed in his revenge. Resuming, by a strong effort, all the external indifference habitual to his manner, he attempted to enter into a conversation with those of the party who where next to him; but his remarks produced answers brief and cold: even Lord Aspeden forgot his diplomacy and his smile; Lord St. George replied to his observations by a monosyllable; and the Duke of Haverfield, for the first time in his life, asserted the prerogative which his rank gave him of setting the example—his grace did not reply to Lord Borodaile at all. In truth, every one present was seriously displeased. All civilised societies have a paramount interest in repressing the rude. Nevertheless, Lord Borodaile bore the brunt of his unpopu-

larity with a steadiness and unembarrassed composure worthy of a better cause; and finding, at last, a companion disposed to be loquacious in the person of Sir Christopher Findlater (whose good heart, though its first impulse resented more violently than that of any heart present the discourtesy of the viscount, yet soon warmed to the *désagrémens* of his situation, and hastened to adopt its favourite maxim of forgive and forget), Lord Borodaile sat the meeting out; and if he did not leave the latest, he was, at least, not the first to follow Clarence—"*L'orgueil ou donne le courage, ou il y supplée.*"[1]

Meanwhile Linden had returned to his solitary home. He hastened to his room—locked the door—flung himself on his sofa, and burst into a violent and almost feminine paroxysm of tears. This fit lasted for more than an hour; and when Clarence at length stilled the indignant swellings of his heart, and rose from his supine position, he started, as his eye fell upon the opposite mirror, so haggard and exhausted seemed the forced and fearful calmness of his countenance. With a hurried step—with arms now folded on his bosom—now wildly tossed from him, and the hand so firmly clenched, that the very bones seemed working through the skin—with a brow now fierce, now only dejected—and a complexion which one while burnt as with the crimson flush of a fever, and at another was wan and colourless, like his whose cheek a spectre has blanched—Clarence paced his apartment, the victim not only of shame—the bitterest of tortures to a young and high mind—but of other contending feelings, which alternately exasperated and palsied his wrath, and gave to his resolves at one moment an almost savage ferocity, and at the next an almost cowardly vacillation.

The clock had just struck the hour of twelve, when a knock at the door announced a visitor. Steps were heard on the stairs, and presently a tap at Clarence's room-door. He unlocked it and the Duke of Haverfield entered.

[1] Pride either gives courage or supplies the place of it.

"I am charmed to find you at home," cried the duke, with his usual half kind, half careless address. "I was determined to call upon you, and be the first to offer my services in this unpleasant affair."

Clarence pressed the duke's hand, but made no answer.

"Nothing could be so unhandsome as Lord Borodaile's conduct," continued the duke. "I hope you both fence and shoot well. I shall never forgive you, if you do not put an end to that piece of rigidity."

Clarence continued to walk about the room in great agitation; the duke looked at him with some surprise. At last Linden paused by the window, and said, half unconsciously—"It must be so—I cannot avoid fighting!"

"Avoid fighting!" cried his grace, in undisguised astonishment. "No indeed—but that is the least part of the matter—you must kill him as well as fight him."

"Kill *him*!" cried Clarence wildly, "whom?" and then sinking into a chair, he covered his face with his hands for a few moments, and seemed to struggle with his emotions.

"Well," thought the duke, "I was never more mistaken in my life. I could have bet my black horse against Trevanion's Julia, which is certainly the most worthless thing I know, that Linden had been a brave fellow; but these English heroes almost go into fits at a duel: one manages such things, as Sterne says, better in France."

Clarence now rose, calm and collected. He sat down—wrote a brief note to Borodaile, demanding the fullest apology, or the earliest meeting—put it into the duke's hands, and said, with a faint smile, "My dear duke, dare I ask you to be a second to a man who has been so grievously affronted, and whose genealogy has been so disputed?"

"My dear Linden," said the duke, warmly, "I have always been grateful to my station in life for this advantage—the freedom with which it has enabled me to select my own acquaintance, and to follow my own pursuits. I am now more grateful to it than ever, because it has given me

a better opportunity than I should otherwise have had of serving one whom I have always esteemed. In entering into your quarrel, I shall at least show the world that there are some men not inferior in pretensions to Lord Borodaile, who despise arrogance and resent overbearance even to others. Your cause I consider the common cause of society; but I shall take it up, if you will allow me, with the distinguishing zeal of a friend."

Clarence, who was much affected by the kindness of this speech, replied in a similar vein; and the duke, having read and approved the letter, rose. "There is, in my opinion," said he—"no time to be lost. I will go to Borodaile this very evening—adieu, *mon cher!* you shall kill the Argus, and then carry off the Io. I feel in a double passion with that ambulating poker, who is only malleable when he is red-hot, when I think how honourably scrupulous you were with La Meronville last night, notwithstanding all her advances—but I go to bury Cæsar, not to scold him.—*Au revoir.*"

CHAPTER XLV.

Conon.—You're well met, Crates.
Crates.—If we part so, Conon.—*Queen of Corinth.*

It was as might be expected from the character of the aggressor. Lord Borodaile refused all apology, and agreed with avidity to a speedy rendezvous. He chose pistols (choice, then, was not merely nominal), and selected Mr. Percy Bobus for his second, a gentleman who was much fonder of acting in that capacity, than in the more honourable one of a principal. The author of *Lacon* says, "that if all seconds were as averse to duels as their principals, there would be very little blood spilt in that way;" and it was certainly astonishing to compare the zeal with which Mr. Bobus busied himself about this "affair," with that

testified by him on another occasion, when he himself was more immediately concerned.

The morning came. Mr. Bobus breakfasted with his friend. "Damn it, Borodaile," said he, as the latter was receiving the ultimate polish of the hairdresser, "I never saw you look better in my life. It will be a great pity if that fellow shoots you."

"Shoots *me!*" said Lord Borodaile, very quietly—"*me*—no!—that is *quite* out of the question; but joking apart, Bobus, I will not kill the young man. Where shall I hit him?"

"In the cap of the knee," said Mr. Percy, breaking an egg.

"Nay, that will lame him for life," said Lord Borodaile, putting on his cravat with peculiar exactitude.

"Serve him right," said Mr. Bobus. "Hang him, I never got up so early in my life—it is quite impossible to eat at this hour. Oh—*à propos*, Borodaile, have you left any little memoranda for me to execute?"

"Memoranda—for what?" said Borodaile, who had now just finished his toilet.

"Oh!" rejoined Mr. Percy Bobus, "in case of accident, you know: the man may shoot well, though I never saw him in the gallery."

"Pray," said Lord Borodaile, in a great, though suppressed, passion, "pray, Mr. Bobus, how often have I to tell you that it is not by Mr. Linden that my days are to terminate: you are sure Carabine saw to that trigger?"

"Certain," said Mr. Percy, with his mouth full, "certain. Bless me, here's the carriage, and breakfast not half done yet."

"Come, come," cried Borodaile, impatiently, "we must breakfast afterwards. Here, Roberts, see that we have fresh chocolate and some more cutlets, when we return."

"I would rather have them now," said Mr. Bobus, foreseeing the possibility of the return being single—"*Ibis! redibis?*" &c.

"Come, we have not a moment to lose," exclaimed Borodaile, hastening down the stairs; and Mr. Percy Bobus followed, with a strange mixture of various regrets, partly for the breakfast that *was* lost, and partly for the friend that *might be.*

When they arrived at the ground, Clarence and the duke were already there: the latter, who was a dead shot, had fully persuaded himself that Clarence was equally adroit, and had, in his providence for Borodaile, brought a surgeon. This was a circumstance of which the viscount, in the plenitude of his confidence for himself and indifference for his opponent, had never once dreamt.

The ground was measured—the parties were about to take the ground. All Linden's former agitation had vanished—his mien was firm, grave, and determined, but he showed none of the careless and fierce hardihood which characterised his adversary; on the contrary, a close observer might have remarked something sad and dejected amidst all the tranquillity and steadiness of his brow and air.

"For Heaven's sake," whispered the duke, as he withdrew from the spot, "square your body a little more to your left and remember your exact level. Borodaile is much shorter than you."

There was a brief, dread pause—the signal was given—Borodaile fired—his ball pierced Clarence's side; the wounded man staggered one step, but fell not. He raised his pistol; the duke bent eagerly forward; an expression of disappointment and surprise passed his lips; Clarence had fired in the air. The next moment Linden felt a deadly sickness come over him—he fell into the arms of the surgeon. Borodaile, touched by a forbearance which he had so little right to expect, hastened to the spot. He leaned over his adversary in greater remorse and pity than he would have readily confessed to himself. Clarence unclosed his eyes; they dwelt for one moment upon the subdued and earnest countenance of Borodaile.

"Thank God," he said faintly, "that *you* were not the

victim," and with those words he fell back insensible. They carried him to his lodgings. His wound was accurately examined. Though not mortal, it was of a dangerous nature; and the surgeons ended a very painful operation, by promising a very lingering recovery.

What a charming satisfaction for being insulted!

CHAPTER XLVI.

Je me contente de ce qui peut s'écrire, et je rêve tout ce qui peut se rêver.[1]—De Sévigné.

About a week after his wound, and the second morning of his return to sense and consciousness, when Clarence opened his eyes, they fell upon a female form seated watchfully and anxiously by his bedside. He raised himself in mute surprise, and the figure, startled by the motion, rose, drew the curtain, and vanished. With great difficulty he rang his bell. His valet, Harrison, on whose mind, though it was of no very exalted order, the kindness and suavity of his master had made a great impression, instantly appeared.

"Who was that lady," asked Linden. "How came she here?"

Harrison smiled—"Oh, sir, pray please to lie down, and make yourself easy: the lady knows you very well and *would* come here; she insists upon staying in the house, so we made up a bed in the drawing-room and she has watched by you night and day. She speaks very little English to be sure, but your honour knows, begging your pardon, how well I speak French."

"French?" said Clarence, faintly—"French? In Heaven's name, who is she?"

"A Madame—Madame—La Melonveal, or some such name, sir," said the valet.

[1] I content myself with writing what I am able, and I dream all I possibly can dream.

Clarence fell back. At that moment his hand was pressed. He turned, and saw Talbot by his side. The kind old man had not suffered La Meronville to be Linden's only nurse—notwithstanding his age and peculiarity of habits, he had fixed his abode all the day in Clarence's house, and at night, instead of returning to his own home, had taken up his lodgings at the nearest hotel.

With a jealous and anxious eye to the real interest and respectability of his adopted son, Talbot had exerted all his address, and even all his power, to induce La Meronville, who had made her settlement previous to Talbot's, to quit the house, but in vain. With that obstinacy which a Frenchwoman, when she is sentimental, mistakes for nobility of heart, the *ci-divant amante* of Lord Borodaile insisted upon watching and tending one, of whose sufferings, she said and believed, she was the unhappy, though innocent cause: and whenever more urgent means of removal were hinted at, La Meronville flew to the chamber of her beloved, apostrophised him in a strain worthy of one of D'Arlincourt's heroines, and in short, was so unreasonably outrageous, that the doctors, trembling for the safety of their patient, obtained from Talbot a forced and reluctant acquiescence in the settlement she had obtained.

Ah! what a terrible creature a Frenchwoman is, when, instead of coquetting with a *caprice*, she insists upon conceiving a *grande passion*. Little, however, did Clarence, despite his vexation, when he learnt of the *bienveillance* of La Meronville, foresee the whole extent of the consequences it would entail upon him: still less did Talbot, who in his seclusion knew not the celebrity of the handsome adventuress, calculate upon the notoriety of her motions, or the ill effect her ostentatious attachment would have upon Clarence's prosperity as a lover to Lady Flora. In order to explain these consequences the more fully, let us, for the present, leave our hero to the care of the surgeon, his friends, and his would-be mistress; and while he is more rapidly recovering than the doctors either hoped or presaged

let us renew our acquaintance with a certain fair correspondent.

LETTER FROM THE LADY FLORA ARDENNE, TO MISS ELEANOR TREVANION.

"My Dearest Eleanor,—I have been very ill, or you would sooner have received an answer to your kind—too kind and consoling letter. Indeed I have only just left my bed; they say that I have been delirious, and I believe it; for you cannot conceive what terrible dreams I have had. But these are all over now, and every one is so kind to me—my poor mother above all! It is a pleasant thing to be ill when we have those we love us to watch our recovery.

"I have only been in bed a few days; yet it seems to me as if a long portion of my existence were past—as if I had stepped into a new era. You remember that my last letter attempted to express my feelings at mamma's speech about Clarence, and at my seeing him so suddenly. Now, dearest, I cannot but look on that day, on these sensations, as on a distant dream. Every one is so kind to me, mamma caresses and soothes me so fondly, that I fancy I must have been under some illusion. I am sure they could not seriously have meant to forbid *his* addresses. No, no: I feel that all will yet be well—so well, that even you, who are of so contented a temper, will own, that if you were not Eleanor you would be Flora.

"I wonder whether Clarence knows that I have been ill? I wish you knew him.—Well, dearest, this letter—a very unhandsome return, I own, for yours—must content you at present, for they will not let me write more—though, so far as I am concerned, I am never so weak, in frame I mean, but what I could scribble to *you* about *him*.

"*Addio—carissima.*

"F. A."

"I have prevailed on mamma, who wished to sit by me and amuse me, to go to the Opera to-night, the only amuse-

ment of which she is particularly fond. Heaven forgive me for my insincerity, but *he* always comes into our box, and I long to hear some news of him."

LETTER II.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"ELEANOR, dearest Eleanor, I am again very ill, but not as I was before, ill from a foolish vexation of mind: no, I am now calm and even happy. It was from an increase of cold only that I have suffered a relapse. You may believe this, I assure you, in spite of your well meant but bitter jests upon my infatuation, as you very rightly call it, for Mr. Linden. You ask me what news from the Opera? Silly girl that I was, to lie awake hour after hour, and refuse even to take my draught, lest I should be surprised into sleep, till mamma returned. I sent Jermyn down directly I heard her knock at the door (oh, how anxiously I had listened for it!) to say that I was still awake and longed to see her. So, of course, mamma came up, and felt my pulse, and said it was very feverish, and wondered the draught had not composed me—with a great deal more to the same purpose, which I bore as patiently as I could, till it was my turn to talk; and then I admired her dress and *coiffure*, and asked if it was a full house, and whether the *prima donna* was in voice, &c., &c.: till, at last, I won my way to the inquiry of who were her visitors. 'Lord Borodaile,' said she, 'and the Duke of ——, and Mr. St. George, and Captain Leslie, and Mr. De Retz, and many others.' I felt so disappointed, Eleanor, but did not dare to ask whether he was not of the list; till, at last, my mother observing me narrowly, said—'And, by the by, Mr. Linden looked in for a few minutes. I am glad, my dearest Flora, that I spoke to you so decidedly about him the other day.' 'Why, mamma?' said I, hiding my face under the clothes. 'Because,' said she, in rather a raised voice, 'he is quite unworthy of you!—but it is late now, and you

should go to sleep—to-morrow I will tell you more.' I would have given worlds to press the question then, but could not venture. Mamma kissed and left me. I tried to twist her words into a hundred meanings, but in each I only thought that they were dictated by some worldly information—some new doubt as to his birth or fortune; and, although that supposition distressed me greatly, yet it could not alter my love, or deprive me of hope; and so I cried and guessed, and guessed and cried, till at last I cried myself to sleep.

"When I awoke, mamma was already up, and sitting beside me: she talked to me for more than an hour upon ordinary subjects, till at last, perceiving how absent or rather impatient I appeared, she dismissed Jermyn, and spoke to me thus:—

"'You know, Flora, that I have always loved you, more perhaps than I ought to have done, more certainly than I have loved your brothers and sisters; but you were my eldest child, my first-born, and all the earliest associations of a mother are blent and entwined with you. You may be sure therefore that I have ever had only your happiness in view, and that it is only with a regard to that end that I now speak to you.'

"I was a little frightened, Eleanor, by this opening, but I was much more touched, so I took mamma's hand and kissed and wept silently over it;—she continued: 'I observed Mr. Linden's attention to you, at ——; I knew nothing more of his rank and birth then than I do at present: but his situation in the embassy and his personal appearance, naturally induced me to suppose him a gentleman of family, and, therefore, if not a great, at least not an inferior match for you, so far as worldly distinctions are concerned. Added to this, he was uncommonly handsome, and had that general reputation for talent which is often better than actual wealth or hereditary titles. I therefore did not check, though I would not encourage any attachment you might form for him; and nothing being declared

or decisive on either side when we left ——, I imagined that if your flirtation with him did even amount to a momentary and girlish phantasy, absence and change of scene would easily and rapidly efface the impression. I believe that in a great measure it *was* effaced when Lord Aspeden returned to England, and with him, Mr. Linden. You again met the latter in society almost as constantly as before; a caprice nearly conquered, was once more renewed; and in my anxiety that you should marry, not for aggrandisement, but for happiness, I own, to my sorrow, that I rather favoured than forbade his addresses. The young man—remember, Flora—appeared in society as the nephew and heir of a gentleman of ancient family and considerable property; he was rising in diplomacy, popular in the world, and, so far as we could see, of irreproachable character; this must plead my excuse for tolerating his visits, without instituting further inquiries respecting him, and allowing your attachment to proceed without ascertaining how far it had yet extended. I was awakened to a sense of my indiscretion, by an inquiry which Mr. Linden's popularity rendered general,—viz.: if Mr. Talbot was his uncle, who was his father? who his more immediate relations? and at that time Lord Borodaile informed us of the falsehood he had either asserted or allowed to be spread in claiming Mr. Talbot as his relation. This you will observe entirely altered the situation of Mr. Linden with respect to you. Not only his rank in life became uncertain, but suspicious. Nor was this all: his very personal respectability was no longer unimpeachable. Was this dubious and intrusive person, without a name, and with a sullied honour, to be your suitor? No, Flora; and it was from this indignant conviction that I spoke to you some days since. Forgive me, my child, if I was less cautious, less confidential than I am now. I did not imagine the wound was so deep, and thought that I should best cure you by seeming unconscious of your danger. The case is now changed; your illness has convinced me of my fault, and the extent of your un-

happy attachment; but will my own dear child pardon me if I still continue, if I even confirm my disapproval of her choice? Last night at the Opera Mr. Linden entered my box. I own that I was cooler to him than usual. He soon left us, and after the Opera I saw him with the Duke of Haverfield, one of the most incorrigible *roues* of the day, leading out a woman of notoriously bad character, and of the most ostentatious profligacy. He might have had some propriety, some decency, some concealment at least, but he passed just before me—before the mother of the woman to whom his vows of honourable attachment were due, and who at that very instant was suffering from her infatuation for him. Now, Flora, for this man, an obscure, and possibly a plebeian adventurer—whose only claim to notice has been founded on a falsehood—whose only merit, a love of you, has been, if not utterly destroyed, at least polluted and debased—for this man, poor alike in fortune, character, and honour, can you any longer profess affection or esteem?'

" 'Never, never, never!' cried I, springing from the bed, and throwing myself upon my mother's neck. 'Never: I am your own Flora once more. I will never suffer any one again to make me forget you,'—and then I sobbed so violently that mamma was frightened, and bade me lie down, and left me to sleep. Several hours have passed since then, and I could not sleep nor think, and I would not cry, for he is no longer worthy of my tears; so I have written to you.

" Oh, how I despise and hate myself for having so utterly, in my vanity and folly, forgotten my mother, that dear, kind, constant friend, who never cost me a single tear, but for my own ingratitude. Think, Eleanor, what an affront to me—to me, who, he so often said, had made all other women worthless in his eyes. Do I hate him? No, I cannot hate. Do I despise? No, I will not despise, but I will forget him, and keep my contempt and hatred for myself.

"God bless you—I am worn out. Write soon, or rather come, if possible, to your affectionate but unworthy friend, "F. A."

"Good Heavens! Eleanor, he is wounded. He has fought with Lord Borodaile. I have just heard it; Jermyn told me. Can it, can it be true? What,—what have I said against him? Hate?—forget? No, no: I never loved him till now."

LETTER III.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[After an interval of several weeks.]

"TIME has flown, my Eleanor, since you left me, after your short but kind visit, with a heavy but healing wing. I do not think I shall ever again be the giddy girl I have been; but my head will change, not my heart; *that* was never giddy, and that shall still be as much yours as ever. You are wrong in thinking I have not forgotten, at least renounced all affection for, Mr. Linden. I have, though with a long and bitter effort. The woman for whom he fought went, you know, to his house, immediately on hearing of his wound. She has continued with him ever since. He had the audacity to write to me once; my mother brought me the note, and said nothing. She read my heart aright. I returned it unopened. He has even called since his convalescence. Mamma was not at home to him. I hear that he looks pale and altered. I hope not—at least I cannot resist praying for his recovery. I stay within entirely; the season is over now, and there are no parties: but I tremble at the thought of meeting him even in the Park or the Gardens. Papa talks of going into the country next week. I cannot tell you how eagerly I look forward to it; and you will then come and see me—will you not, dearest Eleanor?

"Ah! what happy days we will have yet; we will read

Italian together, as we used to do; you shall teach me your songs, and I will instruct you in mine: we will keep birds as we did—let me see—eight years ago. You will never talk to me of my folly: let that be as if it had never been; but I will wonder with you about your future choice, and grow happy in anticipating your happiness. Oh, how selfish I was some weeks ago—then I could only overwhelm you with my egotisms; now, Eleanor it is your turn, and you shall see how patiently I will listen to yours. Never fear that you can be too prolix: the diffuser you are, the easier I shall forgive myself.

"Are you fond of poetry, Eleanor? I used to say so, but I never felt that I was till lately. I will show you my favourite passages in my favourite poets, when you come to see me. You shall see if yours correspond with mine. I am so impatient to leave this horrid town, where everything seems dull, yet feverish—insipid, yet false. Shall we not be happy when we meet? If your dear aunt will come with you, she shall see how I (that is, my mind) am improved.

"Farewell.

"Ever your most affectionate,

"F. A."

CHAPTER XLVII.

Brave Talbot, we will follow thee.—*Henry the Sixth.*

"My letter insultingly returned—myself refused admittance—not a single inquiry made during my illness—indifference joined to positive contempt. By Heaven, it is insupportable!"

"My dear Clarence," said Talbot to his young friend, who, fretful from pain, and writhing beneath his mortification, walked to and fro his chamber with an impatient stride; "my dear Clarence, do sit down, and not irritate

your wound by such violent exercise. I am as much enraged as yourself at the treatment you have received, and no less at a loss to account for it. Your duel, however unfortuntate the event, must have done you credit, and obtained you a reputation both for generosity and spirit; so that it cannot be to that occurrence that you are to attribute the change. Let us rather suppose that Lady Flora's attachment to you has become evident to her father and mother—that they naturally think it would be very undesirable to marry their daughter to a man whose family nobody knows, and whose respectability he is forced into fighting in order to support. Suffer me then to call upon Lady Westborough, whom I knew many years ago, and explain your origin, as well as your relationship to me."

Linden paused irresolutely.

"Were I sure that Lady Flora was not utterly influenced by her mother's worldly views, I would gladly consent to your proposal—but——"

"Forgive me, Clarence," cried Talbot; "but you really argue much more like a very young man than I ever heard you do before—even four years ago. To be sure Lady Flora *is* influenced by her mother's views. Would you have her otherwise? Would you have her, in defiance of all propriety, modesty, obedience to her parents, and right feeling for herself, encourage an attachment to a person not only unknown, but who does not even condescend to throw off the incognito to the woman he addresses? Come, Clarence, give me your instructions, and let me act as your ambassador to-morrow."

Clarence was silent.

"I may consider it settled then," replied Talbot: "meanwhile you shall come home and stay with me: the pure air of the country, even so near town, will do you more good than all the doctors in London; and, besides, you will thus be enabled to escape from that persecuting Frenchwoman."

"In what manner?" said Clarence.

"Why, when you are in my house, she cannot well take

up her abode with you; and you shall, while I am forwarding your suit with Lady Flora, write a very flattering, very grateful letter of excuses to Madame la Meronville. But leave me alone to draw it up for you; meanwhile, let Harrison pack up your clothes and medicines, and we will effect our escape while Madame la Meronville yet sleeps."

Clarence rang the bell; the orders were given, executed, and in less than an hour he and his friends were on their road to Talbot's villa.

As they drove slowly through the grounds to the house, Clarence was sensibly struck with the quiet and stillness which breathed around. On either side of the road the honeysuckle and rose cast their sweet scents to the summer wind, which, though it was scarcely noon, stirred freshly among the trees, and waved, as if it breathed a second youth over the wan cheek of the convalescent. The old servant's ear had caught the sound of wheels, and he came to the door, with an expression of quiet delight on his dry countenance, to welcome in his master. They had lived together for so many years, that they were grown like one another. Indeed, the veteran valet prided himself on his happy adoption of his master's dress and manner. A proud man, we ween, was that domestic, whenever he had time and listeners for the indulgence of his honest loquacity; many an ancient tale of his master's former glories was then poured from his unburthening remembrance. With what a glow, with what a racy enjoyment did he expand upon the triumphs of the past; how eloquently did he particularise the exact grace with which *young* Mr. Talbot was wont to enter the room, in which he instantly became the cynosure of ladies' eyes; how faithfully did he minute the courtly dress, the exquisite choice of colour, the costly splendour of material, which were the envy of the gentles, and the despairing wonder of their valets; and then the zest with which the good old man would cry—"I dressed the boy!" Even still, this modern Scipio (Le Sage's Scipio, not Rome's) would not believe that his master's

sun was utterly set: he was only in a temporary retirement, and would, one day or other, reappear and reastonish the London world. "I would give my right arm," Jasper was wont to say, "to see master at court. How fond the king would be of him! Ah! well, well; I wish he was not so melancholy-like with his books, but would go out like other people!"

Poor Jasper! Time is, in general, a harsh wizard in his transformations; but the change which thou didst lament so bitterly, was happier for thy master than all his former "palmy state" of admiration and homage. "*Nous avons recherché le plaisir,*" says Rousseau, in one of his own inimitable antitheses—"*et le bonheur a fui loin de nous.*"[1] But in the pursuit of Pleasure we sometimes chance on Wisdom, and Wisdom leads us to the right track, which, if it takes us not so far as Happiness, is sure at least of the shelter of Content.

Talbot leant kindly upon Jasper's arm as he descended from the carriage, and inquired into his servant's rheumatism with the anxiety of a friend. The old housekeeper, waiting in the hall, next received his attention; and, in entering the drawing-room, with that consideration, even to animals, which his worldly benevolence had taught him, he paused to notice and caress a large grey cat which rubbed herself against his legs. Doubtless there is some pleasure in making even a grey cat happy!

Clarence having patiently undergone all the shrugs, and sighs, and exclamations of compassion at his reduced and wan appearance, which are the especial prerogatives of ancient domestics, followed the old man into the room. Papers and books, though carefully dusted, were left scrupulously in the places in which Talbot had last deposited them—(incomparable good fortune! what would we not give for such chamber handmaidens!)—fresh flowers were in all the stands and vases; the large library chair

[1] We have pursued pleasure, and happiness has fled far from our reach.

was jealously set in its accustomed place, and all wore, to Talbot's eyes, that cheerful yet sober look of welcome and familiarity which makes a friend of our house.

The old man was in high spirits—

"I know not how it is," said he, "but I feel younger than ever! You have often expressed a wish to see my family seat at Scarsdale: it is certainly a great distance hence: but as you will be my travelling companion, I think I will try and crawl there before the summer is over; or, what say you, Clarence, shall I lend it to you and Lady Flora for the honeymoon? You blush! A diplomatist blush! Ah, how the world has changed since my time! But come, Clarence, suppose you write to La Meronville?"

"Not to-day, sir, if you please," said Linden, "I feel so very weak."

"As you please, Clarence; but some years hence you will learn the value of the present. Youth is always a procrastinator, and, consequently, always a penitent." And thus Talbot ran on into a strain of conversation, half serious, half gay, which lasted till Clarence went upstairs to lie down and muse on Lady Flora Ardenne.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

La vie est un sommeil.—Les vieillards sont ceux dont le sommeil a été plus long: ils ne commencent à se réveiller que quand il faut mourir.[1]—La Bruyere.

"You wonder why I have never turned author, with my constant love of literature, and my former desire of fame," said Talbot, as he and Clarence sat alone after dinner, "discussing many things:" "the fact is, that I have often intended it, and as often been frightened from my design.

[1] Life is a sleep—the aged are those whose sleep has been the longest; they begin to awaken themselves just as they are obliged to die.

Those terrible feuds—those vehement disputes—those recriminations of abuse, so inseparable from literary life, appear to me too dreadful for a man not utterly hardened or malevolent voluntarily to encounter. Good Heavens! what acerbity sours the blood of an author! The manifestoes of opposing generals, advancing to pillage, to burn, to destroy, contain not a tithe of the ferocity which animates the pages of literary controversialists! No term of reproach is too severe, no vituperation too excessive!—the blackest passions, the bitterest, the meanest malice, pour caustic and poison upon every page! It seems as if the greatest talents, the most elaborate knowledge, only sprang from the weakest and worst-regulated mind, as exotics from dung. The private records, the public works of men of letters, teem with an immitigable fury! Their histories might all be reduced into these sentences—they were born—they quarrelled—they died!"

"But," said Clarence, "it would matter little to the world if these quarrels were confined merely to poets and men of imaginative literature, in whom irritability is perhaps almost necessarily allied to the keen and quick susceptibilities which constitute their genius. These are more to be lamented and wondered at among philosophers, theologians, and men of science; the coolness, the patience, the benevolence, which ought to characterise their works, should at least moderate their jealousy and soften their disputes."

"Ah!" said Talbot, "but the vanity of discovery is no less acute than that of creation: the self-love of a philosopher is no less self-love than that of a poet. Besides, those sects the most sure of their opinions, whether in religion or science, are always the most bigoted and persecuting. Moreover, nearly all men deceive themselves in disputes, and imagine that they are intolerant, not through private jealousy, but public benevolence; they never declaim against the injustice done to themselves—no, it is the terrible injury *done* to *society* which grieves and inflames them. It is not

the bitter expressions agains *their* dogmas which give them pain: by no means; it is the atrocious doctrines—so prejudicial to the country, if in politics;—so pernicious to the world, if in philosophy,—which their duty, not their vanity, induces them to denounce and anathematise."

"There seems," said Clarence, "to be a sort of reaction in sophistry and hypocrisy; there has, perhaps, never been a deceiver who was not, by his own passions, himself the deceived."

"Very true," said Talbot; "and it is a pity that historians have not kept that fact in view; we should then have had a better notion of the Cromwells and Mohammeds of the past than we have now, nor judged those as utter impostors who were probably half dupes. But to return to myself. I think you will already be able to answer your own question, why I did not turn author, now that we have given a momentary consideration to the penalties consequent on such a profession. But in truth, as I near the close of my life, I often regret that I had not more courage, for there is in us all a certain restlessness in the persuasion, whether true or false, of superior knowledge or intellect, and this urges us on to the proof; or, if we resist its impulse, renders us discontented with our idleness, and disappointed with the past. I have everything now in my possession which it has been the desire of my later years to enjoy: health, retirement, successful study, and the affection of one in whose breast, when I am gone, my memory will not utterly pass away. With these advantages, added to the gifts of fortune, and an habitual elasticity of spirit, I confess that my happiness is not free from a biting and frequent regret: I would fain have been a better citizen; I would fain have died in the consciousness not only that I had improved my mind to the utmost, but that I had turned that improvement to the benefit of my fellow-creatures. As it is, in living wholly for myself, I feel that my philosophy has wanted generosity; and my indifference to glory has proceeded from a weakness, not, as I once persuaded myself,

from a virtue; but the fruitlessness of my existence has been the consequence of the arduous frivolities and the petty objects in which my early years were consumed; and my mind, in losing the enjoyments which it formerly possessed, had no longer the vigour to create for itself a new soil, from which labour could only hope for more valuable fruits. It is no contradiction to see those who most eagerly courted society in their youth shrink from it the most sensitively in their age; for they who possess certain advantages, and are morbidly vain of them, will naturally be disposed to seek that sphere for which those advantages are best calculated; and when youth and its concomitants depart, the vanity so long fed still remains, and perpetually mortifies them by recalling not so much the qualities they have lost, as the esteem which those qualities conferred; and by contrasting not so much their own present alteration, as the change they experience in the respect and consideration of others. What wonder, then, that they eagerly fly from the world, which has only mortification for their self-love, or that we find in biography, how often the most assiduous votaries of pleasure have become the most rigid of recluses? For my part, I think that that love of solitude which the ancients so eminently possessed, and which, to this day, is considered by some as the sign of a great mind, nearly always arises from a tenderness of vanity, easily wounded in the commerce of the rough world; and that it is under the shadow of Disappointment that we must look for the hermitage. Diderot did well, even at the risk of offending Rousseau, to write against solitude. The more a moralist binds man to man, and forbids us to divorce our interests from our kind, the more effectually is the end of morality obtained. They are only justifiable in seclusion, who, like the Greek philosophers, make that very seclusion the means of serving and enlightening their race—who from their retreats send forth their oracles of wisdom, and render the desert which surrounds them eloquent with the voice of truth. But remember, Clarence (and let my life, useless

in itself, have at least this moral), that for him who in nowise cultivates his talent for the benefit of others; who is contented with being a good hermit at the expense of being a bad citizen; who looks from his retreat upon a life wasted in the *difficiles nugæ* of the most frivolous part of the world, nor redeems in the closet the time he has misspent in the saloon; remember, that for him seclusion loses its dignity, philosophy its comfort, benevolence its hope and even religion its balm. Knowledge unemployed, may preserve us from vice—but *knowledge beneficently employed is virtue*. Perfect happiness, in our present state, is impossible; for Hobbes says justly, that our nature is inseparable from desires, and that the very word desire (the craving for something not possessed) implies that our present felicity is not complete. But there is one way of obtaining what we may term, if not utter, at least mortal happiness; it is this—a sincere and unrelaxing activity for the happiness of others. In that one maxim is concentrated whatever is noble in morality, sublime in religion, or unanswerable in truth. In that pursuit we have *all* scope for whatever is excellent in our hearts, and *none* for the petty passions which our nature is heir to. Thus engaged, whatever be our errors, there will be nobility, not weakness, in our remorse; whatever our failure, virtue, not selfishness, in our regret; and, in success, vanity itself will become holy and triumph eternal. As astrologers were wont to receive upon metals the 'benign aspect of the stars, so as to detain and fix, as it were, the felicity of that hour which would otherwise be volatile and fugitive,'[1] even so will that success leave imprinted upon our memory a blessing which cannot pass away—preserve for ever upon our names, as on a signet, the hallowed influence of the hour in which our great end was effected, and treasure up 'the relics of heaven' in the sanctuary of a human fane."

As the old man ceased, there was a faint and hectic flush over his face, an enthusiasm on his features, which age

[1] Bacon.

made almost holy, and which Clarence had never observed there before. In truth, his young listener was deeply affected, and the advice of his adopted parent was afterwards impressed with a more awful solemnity upon his remembrance. Already he had acquired much worldly lore from Talbot's precepts and conversation. He had obtained even something better than worldly lore—a kindly and indulgent disposition to his fellow-creatures; for he had seen that foibles were not inconsistent with generous and great qualities, and that we judge wrongly of human nature when we ridicule its littleness. The very circumstances which make the shallow misanthropical, incline the wise to be benevolent. Fools discover that frailty is not incompatible with great men, they wonder and despise; but the discerning find that greatness is not incompatible with frailty, and they admire and indulge.

But a still greater benefit than this toleration did Clarence derive from the commune of that night. He became strengthened in his honourable ambition, and nerved to unrelaxing exertion. The recollection of Talbot's last words, on that night, occurred to him often and often, when sick at heart, and languid with baffled hope, it roused him from that gloom and despondency which are always unfavourable to virtue, and incited him once more to that labour in the vineyard which, whether our hour be late or early, will, if earnest, obtain a blessing and reward.

The hour was now waxing late, and Talbot, mindful of his companion's health, rose to retire. As he pressed Clarence's hand and bade him farewell for the night, Linden thought there was something more than usually impressive in his manner and affectionate in his words. Perhaps this was the natural result of their conversation.

The next morning, Clarence was awakened by a noise. He listened, and heard distinctly an alarmed cry proceeding from the room in which Talbot slept, and which was opposite to his own. He rose hastily and hurried to the chamber. The door was open, and the old servant was bending

over the bed: Clarence approached, and saw that he supported his master in his arms. "Good God!" he cried, "what is the matter?" The faithful old man lifted up his face to Clarence, and the big tears rolled fast from eyes in which the sources of such emotion were well-nigh dried up.

"He loved you well, sir!" he said, and could say no more. He dropped the body gently, and throwing himself on the floor sobbed aloud. With a foreboding and chilled heart, Clarence bent forward; the face of his benefactor lay directly before him, and the hand of death was upon it. The soul had passed to its account hours since, in the hush of night: passed, apparently, without a struggle or a pang, like the wind, which animates the harp one moment, and the next is gone.

Linden seized his hand—it was heavy and cold; his eye rested upon the miniature of the unfortunate Lady Merton, which, since the night of the attempted robbery, Talbot had worn constantly round his neck. Strange and powerful was the contrast of the pictured face, in which not a colour had yet faded, and where the hues, and fulness, and prime of youth dwelt, unconscious of the lapse of years, with the aged and shrunken countenance of the deceased.

In that contrast was a sad and mighty moral; it wrought, as it were, a contract between youth and age, and conveyed a rapid but full history of our passions and our life.

The servant looked up once more on the countenance; he pointed towards it, and muttered—"See—see how awfully it is changed!"

"But there is a smile upon it!" said Clarence, as he flung himself beside the body, and burst into tears.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.—BACON.

IT is somewhat remarkable, that while Talbot was bequeathing to Clarence, as the most valuable of legacies, the doctrines of a philosophy he had acquired, perhaps too late to practise, Glendower was carrying those very doctrines, so far as his limited sphere would allow, into the rule and exercise of his life.

Since the death of the bookseller, which we have before recorded, Glendower had been left utterly without resource. The others to whom he applied were indisposed to avail themselves of an unknown ability. The trade of bookmaking was not then as it is now, and if it had been, it would not have suggested itself to the high-spirited and unworldly student. Some publishers offered, it is true, a reward tempting enough for an immoral tale; others spoke of the value of an attack upon the Americans; one suggested an ode to the minister, and another hinted that a pension might possibly be granted to one who would prove extortion not tyranny. But these insinuations fell upon a dull ear, and the tribe of Barabbas were astonished to find that an author could imagine interest and principle not synonymous.

Struggling with want, which hourly grew more imperious and urgent; wasting his life on studies which brought fever to his pulse, and disappointment to his ambition; gnawed to the very soul by the mortifications which his poverty gave to his pride; and watching with tearless eyes, but a maddening brain, the slender form of his wife, now waxing weaker and fainter, as the canker of disease fastened upon the core of her young but blighted life, there was yet a high, though, alas! not constant consolation within him, whenever, from the troubles of this dim spot his thoughts could

escape, like birds released from their cage, and lose themselves in the lustre and freedom of their native heaven.

"If," thought he, as he looked upon his secret and treasured work, "if the wind scatter, or the rock receive these seeds, they were at least dispersed by a hand which asked no selfish return, and a heart which would have lavished the harvest of its labours upon those who know not the husbandman, and trample his hopes into the dust."

But by degrees, this comfort of a noble and generous nature, these whispers of a vanity rather to be termed holy than excusable, began to grow unfrequent and low. The cravings of a more engrossing and heavy want than those of the mind, came eagerly and rapidly upon him; the fair cheek of his infant became pinched and hollow; his wife conquered nature itself by love, and starved herself in silence, and set bread before him with a smile, and bade him eat.

"But you—you?" he would ask inquiringly and then pause.

"I *have* dined, dearest: I want nothing; eat, love, eat."

But he ate not. The food robbed from her seemed to him more deadly than poison; and he would rise, and dash his hand to his brow, and go forth alone, with nature unsatisfied, to look upon this luxurious world, and learn *content*.

It was after such a scene that, one day, he wandered forth into the streets, desperate and confused in mind, and fainting with hunger, and half insane with fiery and wrong thoughts, which dashed over his barren and gloomy soul, and desolated, but conquered not! It was evening: he stood (for he had strode on so rapidly, at first, that his strength was now exhausted, and he was forced to pause) leaning against the railed area of a house, in a lone and unfrequented street. No passenger shared this dull and obscure thoroughfare. He stood, literally, in scene as in heart, solitary amidst the great city, and wherever he looked—lo! there were none!

"Two days," said he, slowly and faintly, "two days, and bread has only once passed my lips; and that was snatched from her—from those lips which I have fed with sweet and holy kisses, and whence my sole comfort in this weary life has been drawn. And she—ay, she starves—and my child, too. They complain not—they murmur not—but they lift up their eyes to me and ask for ——. Merciful God! thou *didst* make man in benevolence; thou *dost* survey this world with a pitying and paternal eye—save, comfort, cherish them, and crush *me* if thou wilt!"

At that moment a man darted suddenly from an obscure alley, and passed Glendower at full speed; presently came a cry, a shout and a rapid trampling of feet, and, in another moment, an eager and breathless crowd rushed upon the solitude of the street.

"Where is he?" cried a hundred voices to Glendower—"where—which road did the robber take?"—but Glendower could not answer; his nerves were unstrung, and his dizzy brain swam and reeled: and the faces which peered upon him, and the voices which shrieked and yelled in his ear were to him as the forms and sounds of a ghastly and phantasmal world. His head drooped upon his bosom—he clung to the area for support—the crowd passed on—they were in pursuit of guilt—they were thirsting after blood—they were going to fill the dungeon and feed the gibbet—what to them was the virtue they could have supported, or the famine they could have relieved? But they knew not his distress, nor the extent of his weakness, or some would have tarried and aided, for there is, after all, as much kindness as cruelty in our nature; perhaps they thought it was only some intoxicated or maudlin idler—or, perhaps, in the heat of their pursuit, they thought not at all.

So they rolled on, and their voices died away, and their steps were hushed, and Glendower, insensible and cold as the iron he clung to, was once more alone. Slowly he revived; he opened his dim and glazing eyes, and saw the

evening star break from its chamber, and, though sullied by the thick and foggy air, scatter its holy smiles upon the polluted city.

He looked quietly on the still night, and its first watcher among the hosts of heaven, and felt something of balm sink into his soul; not, indeed, that vague and delicious calm, which, in his boyhood of poesy and romance, he had drunk in, by green solitudes, from the mellow twilight;—but a quiet, sad and sober, circling gradually over his mind, and bringing it back from its confused and disordered visions and darkness to the recollection and reality of his bitter life.

By degrees the scene he had so imperfectly witnessed, the flight of the robber, and the eager pursuit of the mob, grew over him: a dark and guilty thought burst upon his mind.

"I am a man, like that criminal," said he fiercely. "I have nerves, sinews, muscles, flesh; I feel hunger, thirst, pain, as acutely; why should I endure more than he can? Perhaps he had a wife—a child—and he saw them starving inch by inch, and he felt that he *ought* to be their protector—and so he sinned. And I—I—can I not sin too for mine? can I not dare what the wild beast, and the vulture, and the fierce hearts of my brethren dare for their mates and young? One gripe from this hand—one cry from this voice—and my board might be heaped with plenty, and my child fed, and *she* smile as she was wont to smile—for one night at least."

And as these thoughts broke upon him, Glendower rose, and with a firm step, even in weakness, he strode unconsciously onward.

A figure appeared; Glendower's heart beat thick. He slouched his hat over his brows, and for one moment wrestled with his pride and his stern virtue; the virtue conquered, but not the pride; the virtue forbade him to be the robber—the pride submitted to be the suppliant. He sprang forward, extended his hands towards the stranger, and cried in a sharp voice, the agony of which rang through

the long dull street with a sudden and echoless sound, "Charity—food!"

The stranger paused—one of the boldest of men in his own line, he was as timid as a woman in any other. Mistaking the meaning of the petitioner, and terrified by the vehemence of his gesture, he said, in a trembling tone, as he hastily pulled out his purse—

"There, there, do not hurt me—take it—take it all!"

Glendower knew the voice, as a sound not unfamiliar to him; his pride returned in full force. "None," thought he, "who know me, shall know my full degradation also." And he turned away; but the stranger, mistaking this motion, extended his hand to him, saying, "Take this, my friend—you will have no need of violence!" and as he advanced nearer to his supposed assailant, he beheld by the pale lamplight, and instantly recognised, his features.

"Ah!" cried he in astonishment, but with internal rejoicing—"ah! is it you who are thus reduced?"

"You say right, Crauford," said Glendower, sullenly, and drawing himself up to his full height, "it is *I;* but you are mistaken;—I am a beggar, not a ruffian!"

"Good Heavens!" answered Crauford; "how fortunate that we should meet! Providence watches over us unceasingly! I have long sought you in vain. But"—(and here the wayward malignity, sometimes, though not always, the characteristic of Crauford's nature, irresistibly broke out) —"but that you, of all men, should suffer so—you proud, susceptible, virtuous beyond human virtue—you, whose fibres are as acute as the naked eye—that *you* should bear this, and wince not!"

"You do my humanity wrong!" said Glendower with a bitter and almost ghastly smile; "I do worse than wince!"

"Ay, is it so?" said Crauford; "have you awakened at last? Has your philosophy taken a more impassioned dye?"

"Mock me not!" cried Glendower, and his eye, usually soft in its deep thoughtfulness, glared wild and savage

upon the hypocrite, who stood trembling, yet half sneering, at the storm he had raised—"my passions are even now beyond my mastery—loose them not upon you!"

"Nay," said Crauford, gently, "I meant not to vex or wound you. I have sought you several times since the last night we met, but in vain; you had left your lodgings, and none knew whither. I would fain talk with you. I have a scheme to propose to you which will make you rich for ever—rich—literally rich!—not merely above poverty, but high in affluence!"

Glendower looked incredulously at the speaker, who continued—

"The scheme has danger—*that* you can dare!"

Glendower was still silent; but his set and stern countenance was sufficient reply. "Some sacrifice of your pride," continued Crauford—"that also you can bear?" and the tempter almost grinned with pleasure as he asked the question.

"He who is poor," said Glendower speaking at last, "has a right to pride. He who starves has it too; but he who sees those whom he loves famish, and cannot aid, has it not!"

"Come home with me, then," said Crauford; "you seem faint and weak: nature craves food—come and partake of mine—we will then talk over this scheme, and arrange its completion."

"I cannot," answered Glendower, quietly.

"And why?"

"Because *they* starve at home!"

"Heavens!" said Crauford, affected for a moment into sincerity—"it is indeed fortunate that business should have led me here; but, meanwhile, you will not refuse this trifle—as a loan merely. By and by our scheme will make you so rich that I must be the borrower."

Glendower *did* hesitate for a moment—he did swallow a bitter rising of the heart; but he thought of those at home and the struggle was over.

"I thank you," said he; "I thank you for their sake: the *time may* come,"—and the proud gentleman stopped short, for his desolate fortunes rose before him and forbade all hope of the future.

"Yes!" cried Crauford, "the time may come when you will repay me this money a hundredfold. But where do you live? You are silent. Well, you will not inform me —I understand you. Meet me, here, then, on this very spot, three nights hence—you will not fail?"

"I will not," said Glendower; and pressing Crauford's hand with a generous and grateful warmth, which might have softened a heart less obdurate, he turned away.

Folding his arms, while a bitter yet joyous expression crossed his countenance, Crauford stood still, gazing upon the retreating form of the noble and unfortunate man whom he had marked for destruction.

"Now," said he, "this virtue is a fine thing, a very fine thing to talk so loftily about. A little craving of the gastric juices, a little pinching of this vile body, as your philosophers and saints call our better part, and, lo! virtue oozes out like water through a leaky vessel,—and the vessel sinks! No, no; virtue is a weak game, and a poor game, and a losing game. Why, there is that man, the very pink of integrity and rectitude, he is now only wanting temptation to fall—and he *will* fall, in a fine phrase, too, I'll be sworn! And then, having once fallen, there will be no medium—he will become utterly corrupt; while *I*, honest Dick Crauford, doing as other wise men do, cheat a trick or two, in playing with fortune, without being a whit the worse for it. Do I not subscribe to charities? am I not constant at church, ay, and meeting to boot? kind to my servants, obliging to my friends, loyal to my king? 'Gad, if I were less loving to myself, I should have been far less useful to my country! And now, now, let me see what has brought me to these filthy suburbs. Ah, Madame H——. Woman, incomparable woman! On, Richard Crauford, thou hast made a good night's work of it hitherto!—busi-

ness seasons pleasure!" and the villain upon system moved away.

Glendower hastened to his home; it was miserably changed, even from the humble abode in which we last saw him. The unfortunate pair had chosen their present residence from a melancholy refinement in luxury; they had chosen it because none else shared it with them, and their famine, and pride, and struggles and despair, were without witness or pity.

With a heavy step Glendower entered the chamber where his wife sat. When at a distance he had heard a faint moan, but as he had approached, it ceased; for she, from whom it came, knew his step, and hushed her grief and pain, that they might not add to his own. The peevishness, the querulous and stinging irritations of want, came not to that affectionate and kindly heart; nor could all those biting and bitter evils of fate, which turn the love that is born of luxury into rancour and gall, scathe the beautiful and holy passion which had knit into one those two unearthly natures. They rather clung the closer to each other, as all things in heaven and earth spoke in tempest or in gloom around them, and coined their sorrows into endearment, and their looks into smiles, and strove each from the depth of despair, to pluck hope and comfort for the other.

This, it is true, was more striking and constant in her than in Glendower; for in love, man, be he ever so generous, is always outdone. Yet even when in moments of extreme passion and conflict, the strife broke from his breast into words, never once was his discontent vented upon her, nor his reproaches lavished on any but fortune or himself, nor his murmurs mingled with single breath wounding to her tenderness, or detracting from his love.

He threw open the door; the wretched light cast its sickly beams over the squalid walls, foul with green damps, and the miserable yet clean bed, and the fireless hearth, and the empty board, and the pale cheek of the wife, as

she rose and flung her arms round his neck, and murmured out her joy and welcome. "There," said he, as he extricated himself from her, and flung the money upon the table, "there, love, pine no more, feed yourself and our daughter, and then let us sleep and be happy in our dreams."

A writer, one of the most gifted of the present day, has told the narrator of this history, that no interest of a high nature can be given to extreme poverty. I know not if this be true; yet if I mistake not our human feelings, there is nothing so exalted, or so divine, as a great and brave spirit working out its end through every earthly obstacle and evil: watching through the utter darkness, and steadily defying the phantoms which crowd around it; wrestling with the mighty allurements, and rejecting the fearful voice of that WANT which is the deadliest and surest of human tempters; nursing through all calamity the love of species, and the warmer and closer affections of private ties; sacrificing no duty, resisting all sin; and amidst every horror and every humiliation, feeding the still and bright light of that genius which like the lamp of the fabulist, though it may waste itself for years amidst the depths of solitude, and the silence of the tomb, shall live and burn immortal and undimmed, when all around it is rottenness and decay!

And yet I confess that it is a painful and bitter task to record the humiliations, the wearing, petty, stinging humiliations, of Poverty; to count the drops as they slowly fall, one by one, upon the fretted and indignant heart; to particularise, with the scrupulous and nice hand of indifference, the fractional and divided movements in the dial-plate of Misery; to behold the refinement of birth, the masculine pride of blood, the dignities of intellect, the wealth of knowledge, the delicacy and graces of womanhood—all that ennoble and soften the stony mass of commonplaces which *is* our life frittered into atoms, trampled into the dust and mire of the meanest thoroughfares of distress; life and soul, the energies and aims of man, ground

into one prostrating want, cramped into one levelling sympathy with the dregs and refuse of his kind, blistered into a single galling and festering sore: this is, I own, a painful and a bitter task; but it hath its redemption: a pride even in debasement, a pleasure even in woe: and it is therefore that while I have abridged, I have not shunned it. There are some whom the lightning of fortune blasts, only to render holy. Amidst all that humbles and scathes —amidst all that shatters from their life its verdure, smites to the dust the pomp and summit of their pride, and in the very heart of existence writeth a sudden and "strange defeature," *they* stand erect,—riven, not uprooted,—a monument less of pity than of awe! There are some who pass through the Lazar-House of Misery with a step more august than a Cæsar's in his hall. The very things which, seen alone, are despicable and vile, associated with them become almost venerable and divine; and one ray, however dim and feeble, of that intense holiness which, in the INFANT GOD, shed majesty over the manger and the straw, not denied to those who in the depths of affliction cherish his patient image, flings over the meanest localities of earth an emanation from the glory of Heaven!

CHAPTER L.

Letters from divers hands, which will absolve
Ourselves from long narration.—*Tanner of Tyburn.*

ONE morning about a fortnight after Talbot's death, Clarence was sitting alone, thoughtful and melancholy, when the three following letters were put into his hand:—

LETTER I.

FROM THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD.

"LET me, dear Linden, be the first to congratulate you upon your accession of fortune: five thousand a year, Scars-

dale, and eighty thousand pounds in the funds, are very pretty foes to starvation! Ah, my dear fellow, if you had but shot that frosty Caucasus of humanity, that pillar of the state, made not to bend, that—but you know already whom I mean, and so I will spare you more of my lamentable metaphors: had you shot Lord Borodaile, your happiness would now be complete! Everybody talks of your luck. La Meronville tending on you with her white hands, the prettiest hands in the world—who would not be wounded even by Lord Borodaile, for such a nurse! And then Talbot's—yet, I will not speak of *that*, for you are very unlike the present generation; and who knows but what you may have some gratitude, some affection, some natural feeling in you? I had once; but that was before I went to France—those Parisians, with their fine sentiments, and witty philosophy, play the devil with one's good old-fashioned feelings. So Lord Aspeden is to have an Italian ministry. By the by, shall you go with him, or will you not rather stay at home, and enjoy your new fortunes—hunt—race—dine out—dance—vote in the House of Commons, and, in short, do all that an Englishman and a gentleman should do? *Ornamento e splendor del secol nostro.* Write me a line whenever you have nothing better to do.

"And believe me,

"Most truly yours,

"HAVERFIELD.

"Will you sell your black mare, or will you buy my brown one? *Utrum horum mavis accipe*, the only piece of Latin I remember."

LETTER FROM LORD ASPEDEN.

"MY DEAR LINDEN,

"Suffer me to enter most fully into your feeling. Death, my friend, is common to all: we must submit to its dispensations. I heard accidentally of the great fortune

left you by Mr. Talbot (your father, I suppose I may venture to call him). Indeed, though there is a silly prejudice against illegitimacy, yet as our immortal bard says,

> 'Wherefore base?
> When thy dimensions are as well compact,
> Thy mind as generous and thy shape as true
> As honest madam's issue!'

For my part, my dear Linden, I say, on your behalf, that it is very likely that you *are* a natural son, for such are always the luckiest and the best.

"You have probaby heard of the honour his Majesty has conferred on me, in appointing to my administration the city of ————. As the choice of a secretary has been left to me, I need not say how happy I shall be to keep my promise to you. Indeed, as I told Lord ——— yesterday morning, I do not know anywhere a young man who has more talent, or who plays better on the flute.

"Adieu, my dear young friend,

"And believe me,

"Very truly yours,

"ASPEDEN."

LETTER FROM MADAME DE LA MERONVILLE.

(Translated.)

"You have done me wrong—great wrong. I loved you—I waited on you—tended you—nursed you—gave all up for you; and you forsook me—forsook me without a word. True, that you have been engaged in a melancholy duty, but, at least, you had time to write a line, to cast a thought, to one who had shown for you the love that I have done. But we will pass over all this; I will not reproach you—it is beneath me. The vicious upbraid—*the virtuous forgive!* I have for several days left your house. I should never have come to it, had you not been wounded, and, as I fondly imagined, for my sake. Return when you will, I shall no longer be there to persecute and torment you.

"Pardon this letter. I have said too much for myself—a hundred times too much to you; but I shall not sin again. This intrusion is my last.

"CECILE DE LA MERONVILLE."

These letters will probably suffice to clear up that part of Clarence's history which had not hitherto been touched upon; they will show that Talbot's will (after several legacies to his old servants, his nearest connections, and two charitable institutions, which he had founded, and for some years supported) had bequeathed the bulk of his property to Clarence. The words in which the bequest was made, were kind and somewhat remarkable.—"To my relation and friend, commonly known by the name of Clarence Linden, to whom I am bound alike by blood and affection," &c.—These expressions, joined to the magnitude of the bequest, the apparently unaccountable attachment of the old man to his heir. and the mystery which wrapt the origin of the latter, all concurred to give rise to an opinion, easily received, and soon universally accredited, that Clarence was a natural son of the deceased; and so strong in England is the aristocratic aversion to an unknown lineage, that this belief, unflattering as it was, procured for Linden a much higher consideration, on the score of birth, than he might otherwise have enjoyed. Furthermore will the above correspondence testify the general *éclat* of Madame La Meronville's attachment, and the construction naturally put upon it. Nor do we see much left for us to explain, with regard to the Frenchwoman herself, which cannot equally well be gleaned by any judicious and intelligent reader, from the epistle last honoured by his perusal. Clarence's sense of gallantry did, indeed, smite him severely, for his negligence and ill requital to one, who, whatever her faults and follies, had at least done nothing with which *he* had a right to reproach her. It must, however be considered, in his defence, that the fatal event which had so lately occurred, the relapse which Clarence had suffered in consequence, and

the melancholy confusion and bustle in which the last week or ten days had been passed, were quite sufficient to banish her from his remembrance. Still she was a woman, and had loved, or seemed to love; and Clarence, as he wrote to her a long, kind, and almost brotherly letter, in return for her own, felt that, in giving pain to another, one often suffers almost as much for avoiding as for committing a sin.

We have said his letter was kind—it was also frank, and yet prudent. In it he said he had long loved another —which love alone could have rendered him insensible to her attachment; that he, nevertheless, should always recall her memory with equal interest and admiration; and then, with a tact of flattery which the nature of the correspondence and the sex of the person addressed rendered excusable, he endeavoured, as far as he was able, to soothe and please the vanity which the candour of his avowal was calculated to wound.

When he had finished this letter he despatched another to Lord Aspeden claiming a reprieve of some days before he answered the proposal of the diplomatist. After these epistolary efforts, he summoned his valet, and told him, apparently in a careless tone, to find out if Lady Westborough was still in town. Then throwing himself on the couch, he wrestled with the grief and melancholy which the death of a friend, and more than a father, might well cause in a mind less susceptible than his, and counted the dull hours crawl onward till his servant returned. Lady Westborough and all the family had been gone a week to their seat in ——.

"Well," thought Clarence, "had *he* been alive, I could have intrusted my cause to a mediator; as it is, I will plead, or rather assert it myself. Harrison," said he aloud, "see that my black mare is ready by sunrise to-morrow; I shall leave town for some days."

"Not in your present state of health, sir, surely?" said Harrison, with the license of one who had been a nurse.

"My health requires it—no more words, my good Har-

rison, see that I am obeyed." And Harrison, shaking his head doubtfully, left the room.

"Rich, independent, free to aspire to the heights which in England are only accessible to those who join wealth to ambition, I have at least," said Clarence, proudly, "no unworthy pretensions even to the hand of Lady Flora Ardenne. If she can love me for myself, if she can trust to my honour, rely on my love, feel proud in my pride, and aspiring in my ambition, then, indeed, this wealth will be welcome to me, and the disguised name which has cost me so many mortifications, become grateful, since she will not disdain to share it."

CHAPTER LI.

A little druid wight
Of withered aspect; but his eye was keen
With sweetness mixed—a russet *brown* bedight.
THOMSON'S *Castle of Indolence.*

Thus holding high discourse, they came to where
The cursed carle was at his wonted trade,
Still tempting heedless men into his snare,
In witching wise, as I before have said.—*Ibid.*

IT was a fine, joyous summer morning when Clarence set out, alone, and on horseback, upon his enterprise of love and adventure. If there be anything on earth more reviving and inspiriting than another, it is, to my taste, a bright day, a free horse, a journey of excitement before one, and loneliness! Rousseau—in his own way, a great, though rather a morbid epicure of this world's enjoyments—talks with rapture of his pedestrian rambles when in his first youth. But what are your foot-ploddings to the joy which lifts you into air with the bound of your mettled steed?

But there are times when an iron and stern sadness locks, as it were, within itself our capacities of enjoyment; and

the song of the birds, and the green freshness of the summer morning, and the glad motion of the eager horse, brought neither relief nor change to the musings of the young adventurer.

He rode on for several miles without noticing anything on his road, and only now and then testifying the nature of his thoughts and his consciousness of solitude by brief and abrupt exclamations and sentences, which proclaimed the melancholy yet exciting subjects of his meditations. During the heat of the noon, he rested at a small public-house about — miles from town; and resolving to take his horse at least ten miles further before his day's journey ceased, he remounted towards the evening, and slowly resumed his way.

He was now entering the same county in which he first made his appearance in this history. Although several miles from the spot on which the memorable night with the gypsies had been passed, his thoughts reverted to its remembrance, and he sighed as he recalled the ardent hopes which then fed and animated his heart. While thus musing, he heard the sound of hoofs behind him, and presently came by a sober-looking man, on a rough, strong pony, laden (besides its master's weight) with saddle-bags of uncommon size, and to all appearance substantially and artfully filled.

Clarence looked, and, after a second survey, recognised the person of his old acquaintance, Mr. Morris Brown.

Not equally reminiscent was the worshipful itinerant, who, in the great variety of forms and faces which it was his professional lot to encounter, could not be expected to preserve a very nice or distinguishing recollection of each.

"Your servant, sir, your servant," said Mr. Brown, as he rode his pony alongside of our traveller. "Are you going as far as W—— this evening?"

"I hardly know yet," answered Clarence; "the length of my ride depends upon my horse rather than myself."

"Oh, well, very well," said Mr. Brown: "but you will

allow me, perhaps, sir, the honour of riding with you as far as you go."

"You give me much gratification by your proposal, Mr. Brown!" said Clarence.

The broker looked in surprise at his companion. "So you know me, sir!"

"I do," replied Clarence. "I am surprised that you have forgotten *me*."

Slowly Mr. Brown gazed, till at last his memory began to give itself the rousing shake—"God bless me, sir, I beg you a thousand pardons—I now remember you perfectly—Mr. Linden, the nephew of my old patroness, Mrs. Minden. —Dear, dear, how could I be so forgetful! I hope, by the by, sir, that the shirts wore well? I am thinking you will want some more. I have some capital cambric of curiously fine quality and texture, from the wardrobe of the late Lady Waddilove."

"What, Lady Waddilove still!" cried Clarence. "Why, my good friend, you will offer next to furnish me with pantaloons from her ladyship's wardrobe."

"Why, really, sir, I see you preserve your fine spirits; but I do think I have one or two pair of plum-coloured velvet inexpressibles, that passed into my possession when her ladyship's husband died, which might, perhaps, with a *leetle* alteration, fit you, and at all events, would be a very elegant present from a gentleman to his valet."

"Well, Mr. Brown, whenever I or my valet wear plum-coloured velvet breeches, I will certainly purchase those in your possession: but to change the subject, can you inform me what has become of my old host and hostess, the Copperases, of Copperas Bower?"

"Oh, sir, they are the same as ever—nice genteel people they are, too. Master Adolphus has grown into a fine young gentleman, very nearly as tall as *you* and *I* are. His worthy father preserves his jovial vein, and is very merry whenever I call there. Indeed it was but last week that he made an admirable witticism. 'Bob,' said he—

(Tom—you remember Tom, or De Warens, as Mrs. Copperas was pleased to call him—Tom is gone)—'Bob, have you stopt the coach?' 'Yes, sir,' said Bob. 'And what coach is it?' asked Mr. Copperas. 'It be the Swallow, sir,' said the boy. 'The Swallow! oh, very well,' cried Mr. Copperas; 'then, now, having swallowed in the roll, I will e'en roll in the Swallow!'—Ha! ha! ha! sir, very facetious, was it not?"

"Very, indeed," said Clarence; "and so Mr. De Warens has gone; how came that?"

"Why, sir, you see, the boy was always of a *gay turn*, and he took to frisking about, as he called it, of a night, and so he was taken up for thrashing a watchman, and appeared before Sir John, the magistrate, the next morning."

"Caractacus before Cæsar!" observed Linden; "and what said Cæsar?"

"Sir?" said Mr. Brown.

"I mean what said Sir John?"

"Oh! he asked him his name, and Tom, whose head Mrs. Copperas (poor good woman!) had crammed with pride enough for fifty foot-boys, replied, 'De Warens,' with all the air of a man of independence. 'De Warens!' cried Sir John, amazed, 'we'll have no De's here: take him to Bridewell!' and so Mrs. Copperas, being without a foot-boy, sent for me, and I supplied her—with *Bob!*"

"Out of the late Lady Waddilove's wardrobe too?" said Clarence.

"Ha, ha! that's well, very well, sir. No, *not exactly*, but he was a son of her late ladyship's coachman. Mr. Copperas has had two other servants of the name of Bob before, but this is the biggest of all, so he humorously calls him 'Triple Bob Major!' You observe that road to the right, sir—it leads to the mansion of an old customer of mine, General Cornelius St. Leger; many a good bargain have I sold to his sister. Heaven rest her!—when she died I lost a good friend, though she was a little hot or so, to be

sure. But she had a relation, a young lady—such a lovely, noble-looking creature—it did one's heart, ay, and one's eyes also, good to look at her; and she's gone too—well, well, one loses one's customers sadly; it makes me feel old and comfortless to think of it. Now, yonder, as far as you can see among those distant woods, lived another friend of mine, to whom I offered to make some very valuable presents upon his marriage with the young lady I spoke of just now, but, poor gentleman, he had not time to accept them; he lost his property by a lawsuit, a few months after he was married, and a very different person now has Mordaunt Court."

"Mordaunt Court!" cried Clarence; "do you mean to say that Mr. Mordaunt has lost that property?"

"Why, sir, one Mr. Mordaunt has lost it, and another has gained it: but the real Mr. Mordaunt has not an acre in this county or elsewhere, I fear, poor gentleman. He is universally regretted, for he was very good and very generous, though they say he was also mighty proud and reserved; for my part I never perceived it. If one is not proud one's self, Mr. Linden, one is very little apt to be hurt by pride in other people."

"And where is Mr. Algernon Mordaunt?" asked Clarence, as he recalled his interview with that person, and the interest with which Algernon then inspired him.

"That, sir, is more than any of us can say. He has disappeared altogether. Some declare that he has gone abroad, others that he is living in Wales in the greatest poverty. However, wherever he is, I am sure that he cannot be rich; for the lawsuit quite ruined him, and the young lady he married had not a farthing."

"Poor Mordaunt," said Clarence, musingly.

"I think, sir, that the squire would not be best pleased if he heard you pity him. I don't know why, but he certainly looked, walked, and moved like one whom you felt it very hard to pity. But I am thinking that it is a great shame that the general should not do anything for Mr.

Mordaunt's wife, for she was his own flesh and blood; and I am sure *he* had no cause to be angry at her marrying a gentleman of such old family as Mr. Mordaunt. I am a great stickler for birth, sir—I learnt that from the late Lady W. 'Brown,' she said, and I shall never forget her ladyship's air when she did say it, 'Brown, respect your superiors, and never fall into the hands of the republicans and atheists!'"

"And why," said Clarence, who was much interested in Mordaunt's fate, "did General St. Leger withhold his consent?"

"That we don't exactly know, sir; but some say that Mr. Mordaunt was very high and proud with the general, and the general was to the full as fond of his purse as Mr. Mordaunt could be of his pedigree—and so, I suppose, one pride clashed against the other, and made a quarrel between them."

"Would not the general, then, relent after the marriage?"

"Oh! no, sir,—for it was a runaway affair. Miss Diana St. Leger, his sister, was as hot as ginger upon it, and fretted and worried the poor general, who was never of the mildest, about the match, till at last he forbade the poor young lady's very name to be mentioned. And when Miss Diana died about two years ago, he suddenly introduced a tawny sort of *cretur*, whom they call a mulatto or creole, or some such thing, into the house; and it seems that he has had several children by her, whom he never durst own during Miss Diana's life, but whom he now declares to be his heirs. Well—they rule him with a rod of iron, and suck him as dry as an orange. They are a bad, griping set, all of them; and, I am sure, I don't say so from any selfish feeling, Mr. Linden, though they have forbid me the house, and called me to my very face, an old cheating Jew. Think of *that*, sir!—I, whom the late Lady W. in her exceeding friendship used to call 'honest Brown'—I whom your worthy—"

"And who," uncourteously interrupted Clarence, "has Mordaunt Court now?"

"Why, a distant relation of the last squire's, an elderly gentleman who calls himself Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt. I am going there to-morrow morning, for I still keep up a connection with the family. Indeed the old gentleman bought a lovely little ape of me, which I did intend as a present to the late (as I may call him) Mr. Mordaunt; so, though I will not say I exactly like him—he is a hard hand at a bargain—yet at least I will not deny him his due."

"What sort of a person is he? What character does he bear?" asked Clarence.

"I really find it hard to answer that question," said the gossiping Mr. Brown. "In great things he is very lavish and ostentatious, but in small things he is very penurious and saving, and miser-like—and all for one son, who is deformed and very sickly. He seems to doat on that boy; and now I have got two or three little presents in these bags for Mr. Henry. Heaven forgive me, but when I look at the poor creature, with his face all drawn up, and his sour, ill-tempered voice, and his limbs crippled, I almost think it would be better if he were in his grave, and the rightful Mr. Mordaunt, who would then be the next of kin, in his place."

"So then, there is only this unhappy cripple between Mr. Mordaunt and the property?" said Clarence.

"Exactly so, sir. But will you let me ask you where you shall put up at W——? I will wait upon you, if you will give me leave, with some very curious and valuable articles, highly desirable either for yourself or for little presents to your friends."

"I thank you," said Clarence, "I shall make no stay at W——, but I shall be glad to see you in town next week. Favour me, meanwhile, by accepting this trifle."

"Nay, nay, sir," said Mr. Brown, pocketing the money —"I really cannot accept this—anything in the way of exchange—a ring, or a seal, or—"

"No, no, not at present," said Clarence; "the night is coming on, and I shall make the best of my way. Good-bye, Mr. Brown;" and Clarence trotted off; but he had scarce got sixty yards before he heard the itinerant merchant cry out—"Mr. Linden, Mr. Linden!" and looking back he beheld the honest Brown putting his shaggy pony at full speed, in order to overtake him: so he pulled up.

"Well, Mr. Brown, what do you want?"

"Why, you see, sir, you gave me no exact answer about the plum-coloured velvet inexpressibles," said Mr. Brown.

CHAPTER LII.

Are we contemned!—*The Double Marriage.*

It was dusk when Clarence arrived at the very same inn at which, more than five years ago, he had assumed his present name. As he recalled the note addressed to him, and the sum (his whole fortune) which it contained, he could not help smiling at the change his lot had since then undergone; but the smile soon withered when he thought of the kind and paternal hand from which that change had proceeded, and knew that his gratitude was no longer availing, and that that hand, in pouring its last favours upon him, had become cold. He was ushered into No. Four, and left to his meditations till bedtime.

The next day he recommenced his journey. Westborough Park was, though in another county, within a short ride of W——; but as he approached it, the character of the scenery became essentially changed. Bare, bold, and meagre, the features of the country bore somewhat of a Scottish character. On the right side of the road was a precipitous and perilous descent, and some workmen were placing posts along a path for foot-passengers on that side nearest the carriage road, probably with a view to preserve unwary

coachmen or equestrians from the dangerous vicinity of the descent, which a dark night might cause them to incur. As Clarence looked idly on the workmen, and painfully on the crumbling and fearful descent I have described, he little thought that that spot would, a few years after, become the scene of a catastrophe affecting in the most powerful degree the interests of his future life. Our young traveller put up his horse at a small inn, bearing the Westborough arms, and situated at a short distance from the park gates. Now that he was so near his mistress—now that less than an hour, nay, than a fourth part of an hour, might place him before her, and decide his fate, his heart, which had hitherto sustained him, grew faint, and presented, first fear, then anxiety, and, at last, despondency to his imagination and forebodings.

"At all events," said he, "I will see her alone before I will confer with her artful and proud mother, or her cipher of a father. I will then tell her all my history, and open to her all my secrets; I will only conceal from her my present fortunes, for even if rumour should have informed her of them, it will be easy to give the report no sanction; I have a right to that trial. When she is convinced that, at least, neither my birth nor character can disgrace her, I shall see if her love can enable her to overlook my supposed poverty, and to share my uncertain lot. If so, there will be some triumph in undeceiving her error and rewarding her generosity; if not, I shall be saved from involving my happiness with that of one who looks only to my worldly possessions. I owe it to her, it is true, to show her that I am no low-born pretender; but I owe it also to myself to ascertain if my own individual qualities are sufficient to gain her hand."

Fraught with these ideas, which were natural enough to a man whose peculiar circumstances were well calculated to make him feel rather soured and suspicious, and whose pride had been severely wounded by the contempt with which his letter had been treated—Clarence walked into

the park, and, hovering around the house, watched and waited that opportunity of addressing Lady Flora, which he trusted her habits of walking would afford him; but hours rolled away, the evening set in, and Lady Flora had not once quitted the house.

More disappointed and sick at heart than he liked to confess, Clarence returned to his inn, took his solitary meal, and strolling once more into the park, watched beneath the windows till midnight, endeavouring to guess which were the casements of her apartments, and feeling his heart beat high at every light which flashed forth, and disappeared, and every form which flitted across the windows of the great staircase. Little did Lady Flora, as she sat in her room alone, and, in tears, mused over Clarence's fancied whorthlessness and infidelity, and told her heart again and again that she loved no more—little did she know whose eye kept vigils without, or whose feet brushed away the rank dews beneath her windows, or whose thoughts, though not altogether unmingled with reproach, were riveted with all the ardour of a young and first love upon her.

It was unfortunate for Linden that he had no opportunity of personally pleading his suit; his altered form and faded countenance would at least have insured a hearing and an interest for his honest though somewhat haughty sincerity; but though that day, and the next, and the next, were passed, in the most anxious and unremitting vigilance, Clarence only once caught a glimpse of Lady Flora, and then she was one amidst a large party; and Clarence, fearful of a premature and untimely discovery, was forced to retire into the thicknesses of the park, and lose the solitary reward of his watches almost as soon as he had won it.

Wearied and racked by his suspense, and despairing of obtaining any favourable opportunity for an interview, without such a request, Clarence at last resolved to write to Lady Flora, entreating her assent to a meeting, in which he pledged himself to clear up all that had hitherto seemed

doubtful in his conduct or mysterious in his character. Though respectful, urgent, and bearing the impress of truth and feeling, the tone of the letter was certainly that of a man who conceived he had a right to a little resentment for the past, and a little confidence for the future. It was what might well be written by one who imagined his affection had once been returned, but would as certainly have been deemed very presumptuous by a lady who thought that the affection itself was a liberty.

Having penned this epistle, the next care was how to convey it. After much deliberation, it was at last committed to the care of a little girl, the daughter of the lodge-keeper, whom Lady Flora thrice a week personally instructed in the mysteries of spelling, reading, and caligraphy. With many injunctions to deliver the letter only to the hands of the beautiful teacher, Clarence trusted his despatches to the little scholar, and, with a trembling frame and wistful eye, watched Susan take her road, with her green satchel and her shining cheeks, to the great house.

One hour, two hours, three hours, passed, and the messenger had not returned. Restless and impatient, Clarence walked back to his inn, and had not been there many minutes before a servant, in the Westborough livery, appeared at the door of the humble hostelry, and left the following letter for his perusal and gratification:—

"Sir,

"The letter intended for my daughter has just been given to me by Lady Westborough. I know not what gave rise to the language, or the very extraordinary request for a clandestine meeting, which you have thought proper to address to Lady Flora Ardenne; but you will allow me to observe, that if you intend to confer upon my daughter the honour of a matrimonial proposal, she fully concurs with me and her mother in the negative which I feel necessitated to put upon your obliging offer.

"I need not add that all correspondence with my daughter must close here. I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your very obedient servant,

"WESTBOROUGH.

"Westborough Park.
"To Clarence Linden, Esq."

Had Clarence's blood been turned to fire, his veins could not have swelled and burnt with a fiercer heat than they did, as he read the above letter—a masterpiece, perhaps, in the line of what may be termed the "d—d civil" of epistolary favours. "Insufferable arrogance!" he muttered between his teeth. "I will live to repay it. Perfidious, unfeeling woman—what an escape I have had of her! Now, now, I am on the world, and alone, thank Heaven. I will accept Aspeden's offer, and leave this country; when I return, it shall not be as a humble suitor to Lady Flora Ardenne. Pish! how the name sickens me: but come, I have a father—at least a nominal one. He is old and weak, and may die before I return. I will see him once more, and then, hey for Italy! Oh! I am so happy—so happy at my freedom and escape. What, ho!—waiter!—my horse instantly!"

CHAPTER LIII.

Luer.—What has thy father done?
Beat.—What have I done?
Am I not innocent?—*The Cenci.*

THE twilight was darkening slowly over a room of noble dimensions and costly fashion. Although it was the height of summer, a low fire burnt in the grate; and, stretching his hands over the feeble flame, an old man, of about sixty, sate in an armchair, curiously carved with armorial bearings. The dim, yet fitful flame cast its up-

ward light upon a countenance, stern, haughty, and repellent, where the passions of youth and manhood had dug themselves graves in many an iron line and deep furrow: the forehead, though high, was narrow and compressed—the brows sullenly overhung the eyes, and the nose, which was singularly prominent and decided, age had sharpened, and brought out as it were, till it gave a stubborn and very forbidding expression to the more sunken features over which it rose with exaggerated dignity. Two bottles of wine, a few dried preserves, and a water glass, richly chased, and ornamented with gold, showed that the inmate of the apartment had passed the hour of the principal repast, and his loneliness at a time usually social, seemed to indicate that few olive branches were accustomed to overshadow his table.

The windows of the dining-room reached to the ground, and without, the closing light just enabled one to see a thick copse of wood, which, at a very brief interval of turf, darkened immediately opposite the house. While the old man was thus bending over the fire and conning his evening contemplations, a figure stole from the copse I have mentioned, and approaching the window, looked pryingly into the apartment; then with a noiseless hand it opened the spring of the casement, which was framed on a peculiar and old-fashioned construction, that required a practised and familiar touch—entered the apartment, and crept on, silent and unperceived by the inhabitant of the room, till it paused and stood motionless, with folded arms, scarce three steps behind the high back of the old man's chair.

In a few minutes the latter moved from his position, and slowly rose; the abruptness with which he turned, brought the dark figure of the intruder full and suddenly before him: he started back, and cried in an alarmed tone—"Who is there?"

The stranger made no reply.

The old man, in a voice in which anger and pride mingled with fear, repeated the question. The figure ad-

vanced, dropped the cloak in which it was wrapped, and presenting the features of Clarence Linden, said, in a low but clear tone,

"Your son."

The old man dropped his hold of the bell-rope, which he had just before seized, and leaned as if for support against the oak wainscot; Clarence approached.

"Yes!" said he mournfully, "your unfortunate, your offending, but your guiltless son. More than five years I have been banished from your house; I have been thrown, while yet a boy, without friends, without guidance, without name, upon the wide world and to the mercy of chance. I come now to you as a man, claiming no assistance, and uttering no reproach, but to tell you that him whom an earthly father rejected, God has preserved; that without one unworthy or debasing act, I have won for myself the friends who support, and the wealth which dignifies, life,—since it renders it independent. Through all the disadvantages I have struggled against, I have preserved unimpaired my honour, and unsullied my conscience; you have disowned, but you might have claimed me without shame. Father, these hands are clean!"

A strong and evident emotion shook the old man's frame. He raised himself to his full height, which was still tall and commanding, and in a voice, the natural harshness of which was rendered yet more repellent by passion, replied, "Boy! your presumption is insufferable. What to me is your wretched fate? Go—go—go to your miserable mother; find her out—claim kindred there; live together, toil together, rot together, but come not to me!—disgrace to my house—ask not admittance to my affections; the law may give you my name, but sooner would I be torn piecemeal than own your right to it. If you want money, name the sum, take it; cut up my fortune to shreds—seize my property—revel on it—but come not *here*. This house is sacred; pollute it not: I disown you; I discard you; I—ay, I detest—I loathe you!"

And with these words, which came forth as if heaved from the inmost heart of the speaker, who shook with the fury he endeavoured to stifle, he fell back into his chair, and fixed his eyes, which glared fearfully through the increasing darkness, upon Linden, who stood high, erect, and sorrowfully before him.

"Alas, my lord!" said Clarence, with mournful bitterness, "have not the years which have seared your form and whitened your locks brought some meekness to your rancour, some mercy to your injustice, for one whose only crime against you seems to have been his birth. But I said I came not to reproach—nor do I. Many a bitter hour, many a pang of shame, and mortification, and misery, which have made scars in my heart that will never wear away, my wrongs have cost me—but let them pass. Let them not swell your future and last account whenever it be required. I am about to leave this country, with a heavy and foreboding heart; we may never meet again on earth. I have no longer any wish, any chance of resuming the name you have deprived me of. I shall never thrust myself on your relationship, or cross your view. Lavish your wealth upon him whom you have placed so immeasurably above me in your affections. But I have not deserved your curse, father; give me your blessing, and let me depart in peace."

"Peace! and what peace have I had?—what respite from gnawing shame, the foulness and leprosy of humiliation and reproach, since—since—? But this is not your fault, you say: no, no—it is another's; and you are only the mark of my stigma, my disgrace, not its perpetrator. Ha! a nice distinction, truly. My blessing you say! Come, kneel; kneel, boy, and have it!"

Clarence approached, and stood bending and bareheaded before his father, but he knelt not.

"Why do you not kneel?" cried the old man, vehemently.

"It is the attitude of the injurer, not of the injured!" said Clarence, firmly.

"Injured—insolent reprobate—is it not I who am in-

jured? Do you not read it in my brow—here, here?" and the old man struck his clenched hand violently against his temples. "Was I not injured?"—(he continued, sinking his voice into a key unnaturally low)—"did I not trust implicitly?—did I not give up my heart without suspicion? —was I not duped deliciously?—was I not kind enough, blind enough, fool enough—and was I not betrayed—damnably, filthily betrayed? But that was *no* injury. Was not my old age turned, a sapless tree, a poisoned spring?—were not my days made a curse to me, and my nights a torture?—was I not, am I not, a mock, and a bye-word, and a miserable, impotent, unavenged old man? Injured! —But this is no injury—Boy, boy, what are your wrongs to mine?"

"Father!" cried Clarence, deprecatingly, "I am not the cause of your wrongs: is it just that the innocent should suffer for the guilty?"

"Speak not in that voice!" cried the old man—"that voice!—fie, fie on it. Hence! away!—away, boy!—why tarry you?—My son, and have that voice?—Pooh, you are *not* my son. Ha! ha!—*my* son?"

"What am I, then?" said Clarence, soothingly; for he was shocked and grieved, rather than irritated by a wrath which partook so strongly of insanity.

"I will tell you," cried the father—"I will tell you what you are—you are my curse!"

"Farewell!" said Clarence, much agitated, and retiring to the window by which he had entered; "may your heart never smite you for your cruelty! Farewell!—may the blessing you have withheld from me be with you!"

"Stop!—stay!" cried the father; for his fury was checked for one moment, and his nature, fierce as it was, relented: but Clarence was already gone, and the miserable old man was left alone to darkness, and solitude, and the passions which can make a hell of the human heart!

CHAPTER LIV.

Sed quæ præclara et prospera tanti,
Ut rebus lætis par sit mensura malorum?[1]—JUVENAL.

WE are now transported to a father and a son of a very different stamp.

It was about the hour of one P.M., when the door of Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt's study was thrown open, and the servant announced Mr. Brown.

"Your servant, sir—your servant, Mr. Henry," said the itinerant, bowing low to the two gentlemen thus addressed. The former, Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt, might be about the same age as Linden's father. A shrewd, sensible, ambitious man of the world, he had made his way from the state of a younger brother, with no fortune and very little interest, to considerable wealth, besides the property he had acquired by law, and to a degree of consideration for general influence and personal ability, which, considering he had no official or parliamentary rank, very few of his equals enjoyed. Persevering, steady, crafty, and possessing, to an eminent degree, that happy art of "*canting*" which opens the readiest way to character and consequence, the rise and reputation of Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt appeared less to be wondered at than envied; yet, even envy was only for those who could not look beyond the surface of things. He was at heart an anxious and unhappy man. The evil we do in the world is often paid back in the bosom of home. Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt was like Crauford, what might be termed a mistaken utilitarian: he had lived utterly and invariably for self; but instead of uniting self-interest with the interest of others, he considered them as perfectly incompatible ends. But character was among the greatest of all objects to him; so that, though he had rarely deviated

[1] But what excellence or prosperity so great that there should be an equal measure of evils for our joys?

into what might fairly be termed a virtue, he had never transgressed what might rigidly be called a propriety. He had not the aptitude, the wit, the moral audacity of Crauford: he could not have indulged in one offence with impunity, by a mingled courage and hypocrisy in veiling others —he was the slave of the forms which Crauford subjugated to himself. He was only so far resembling Crauford as one man of the world resembles another in selfishness and dissimulation: he could be dishonest, not villanous, much less a villain upon system. He was a *canter*, Crauford a *hypocrite:* his uttered opinions were, like Crauford's, different from his conduct; but he *believed* the truth of the former even while sinning in the latter: he canted so sincerely that the tears came into his eyes when he spoke. Never was there a man more exemplary in words: people who departed from him went away impressed with the idea of an excess of honour—a plethora of conscience. "It was almost a pity," said they, "that Mr. Vavasour was so romantic;" and thereupon they named him as executor to their wills and guardian to their sons. None but he could, in carrying the lawsuit against Mordaunt, have lost nothing in reputation by success. But there was something so specious, so ostensibly fair in his manner and words, while he was ruining Mordaunt, that it was impossible not to suppose he was actuated by the purest motives, the most holy desire for justice—not for himself, he said, for he was old, and already rich enough,—but for his son! From that son came the punishment of all his offences—the black drop at the bottom of a bowl seemingly so sparkling. To him, as the father grew old, and desirous of quiet, Vavasour had transferred all his selfishness, as if to a securer and more durable firm. The child, when young, had been singularly handsome and intelligent; and Vavasour, as he toiled and toiled at his ingenious and graceful cheateries, pleased himself with anticipating the importance and advantages the heir to his labours would enjoy. For that son he certainly *had* persevered more arduously than otherwise he might

have done in the lawsuit, of the justice of which he better satisfied the world than his own breast; for that son he rejoiced as he looked around the stately halls and noble domain from which the rightful possessor had been driven; for that son he extended economy into penuriousness, and hope into anxiety; and, too old to expect much more from the world himself, for that son he anticipated, with a wearing and feverish fancy, whatever wealth could purchase, beauty win, or intellect command.

But as if, like the Castle of Otranto, there was something in Mordaunt Court which contained a penalty and a doom for the usurper, no sooner had Vavasour possessed himself of his kinsman's estate, than the prosperity of his life dried and withered away, like Jonah's gourd in a single night. His son, at the age of thirteen, fell from a scaffold, on which the workmen were making some extensive alterations in the old house, and became a cripple and a valetudinarian for life. But still Vavasour, always of a sanguine temperament, cherished a hope that surgical assistance might restore him: from place to place, from professor to professor, from quack to quack, he carried the unhappy boy, and as each remedy failed, he was only the more impatient to devise a new one. But as it was the mind as well as the person of his son in which the father had stored up his ambition; so, in despite of this fearful accident, and the wretched health by which it was followed, Vavasour never suffered his son to rest from the tasks, and tuitions, and lectures of the various masters by whom he was surrounded. The poor boy, it is true, deprived of physical exertion, and naturally of a serious disposition, required very little urging to second his father's wishes for his mental improvement; and as the tutors were all of the orthodox university calibre, who imagine that there is no knowledge (but vanity) in any other works than those in which their own education has consisted; So Henry Vavasour became at once the victor and victim of Bentleys and Scaligers, word-weighers and metre-scanners, till,

utterly ignorant of everything which could have softened his temper, dignified his misfortunes, and reconciled him to his lot, he was sinking fast into the grave, soured by incessant pain into moroseness, envy, and bitterness; exhausted by an unwholesome and useless application to unprofitable studies; an excellent scholar (as it is termed), with the worst regulated and worst informed mind of almost any of his contemporaries equal to himself in the advantages of ability, original goodness of disposition, and the costly and profuse expenditure of education.

But the vain father, as he heard, on all sides, of his son's talents, saw nothing sinister in their direction; and though the poor boy grew daily more contracted in mind and broken in frame, Vavasour yet hugged more and more closely to his breast the hope of ultimate cure for the latter, and future glory for the former. So he went on heaping money, and extending acres, and planting, and improving, and building, and hoping, and anticipating, for one at whose very feet the grave was already dug!

But we left Mr. Brown in the study, making his bow and professions of service to Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt and his son.

"Good day, *honest* Brown," said the former, a middle-sized and rather stout man, with a well-powdered head, and a sharp, shrewd, and very sallow countenance; "good-day—have you brought any of the foreign *liqueurs* you spoke of for Mr. Henry?"

"Yes, sir, I have some curiously fine *eau d'or* and *liqueurs des îles*, besides the *marasquino* and *curaçoa*. The late Lady Waddilove honoured my taste in these matters with her especial approbation."

"My dear boy," said Vavasour, turning to his son, who lay extended on the couch, reading *not* the *Prometheus* (that most noble drama ever created) *but the notes upon it*—"my dear boy, as you are fond of *liqueurs*, I desired Brown to get some peculiarly fine; perhaps——"

"Pish!" said the son, fretfully interrupting him, "do, I

beseech you, take your hand off my shoulder. See now, you have made me lose my place. I really do wish you would leave me alone for one moment in the day."

"I beg your pardon, Henry," said the father, looking reverently on the Greek characters which his son preferred to the newspaper. "It is very vexatious, I own; but do taste these *liqueurs*. Dr. Lukewarm said you might have everything you liked—"

"But quiet," muttered the cripple.

"I assure you, sir," said the wandering merchant, "that they are excellent; allow me, Mr. Vavasour Mordaunt, to ring for a corkscrew. I really do think, sir, that Mr. Henry looks much better—I declare he has quite a colour."

"No, indeed!" said Vavasour, eagerly. "Well, it seems to *me*, too, that he is getting better. I intend him to try Mr. E——'s patent collar in a day or two; but that will in some measure prevent his reading. A great pity; for I am very anxious that he should lose no time in his studies just at present. He goes to Cambridge in October."

"Indeed, sir! Well, he will set the town in a blaze, I guess, sir! Everybody says what a fine scholar Mr. Henry is—even in the servants' hall!"

"Ay, ay," said Vavasour, gratified even by this praise, "he is clever enough, Brown; and, what is more" (and here Vavasour's look grew sanctified), "he is good enough. His principles do equal honour to his head and heart. He would be no son of mine if he were not as much the gentleman as the scholar."

The youth lifted his heavy and distorted face from the his book, and a sneer raised his lip for a moment; but a sudden spasm of pain seizing him, the expression changed, and Vavasour, whose eyes were fixed upon him, hastened to his assistance.

"Throw open the window, Brown, ring the bell—call—"

"Pooh, father," cried the boy, with a sharp, angry voice, "I am not going to die yet, nor faint either; but it is all your fault. If you *will* have those odious, vulgar people

here for *your own* pleasure, at least suffer me, another day, to retire."

"My son, my son!" said the grieved father, in reproachful anger, "it was my anxiety to give you some trifling enjoyment that brought Brown here—you must be sensible of that!"

"You tease me to death," grumbled the peevish unfortunate.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Brown, "shall I leave these bottles here? or do you please that I shall give them to the but er? I see that I am displeasing and troublesome to Mr. Henry; but as my worthy friend and patroness, the late Lady—"

"Go—go—honest Brown!" said Vavasour, (who desired every man's good word)—"go, and give the *liqueurs* to Preston. Mr. Henry is extremely sorry that he is too unwell to see you now; and I—I have the heart of a father for his sufferings."

Mr. Brown withdrew. "'Odious and vulgar,'" said he to himself, in a little fury—for Mr. Brown peculiarly valued himself on his gentility—"'odious and vulgar!' To think of his little *lordship* uttering such shameful words! However, I will go into the steward's room, and abuse him there. But, I suppose, I shall get no dinner in this house—no, not so much as a crust of bread; for while the old gentleman is launching out into such prodigious expenses on a great scale—making heathenish temples, and spoiling the fine old house with his new picture gallery and nonsense—he is so close in small matters, that I warrant not a candle-end escapes him—griping and pinching, and squeezing with one hand, and scattering money, as if it were dirt, with the other—and all for that cross, ugly, deformed, little whipper-snapper of a son. 'Odious and vulgar,' indeed! What shocking language! Mr. Algernon Mordaunt would never have made use of such words, I know. And, bless me, now I think of it, I wonder where that poor gentleman is. The young heir here is not long for this world, I can see; and who knows but what Mr. Algernon may be in great

distress; and I am sure, as far as four hundred pounds, or even a thousand, go, I would not mind lending it him, only upon the post-obits of Squire Vavasour and his hopeful. I like doing a kind thing; and Mr. Algernon was always very good to me; and I am sure I don't care about the security, though I think it will be as sure as sixpence; for the old gentleman must be past sixty, and the young one is the worse life of the two. And when he's gone—what relation so near as Mr. Algernon? We should help one another—it is but one's duty: and if he is in great distress he would not mind a handsome premium. Well, nobody can say Morris Brown is not as charitable as the best Christian breathing; and, as the late Lady Waddilove very justly observed, 'Brown, believe me, a prudent risk is the surest gain!' I will lose no time in finding the late squire out."

Muttering over these reflections, Mr. Brown took his way to the steward's room.

CHAPTER LV.

Clar.—How, two letters?—*The Lover's Progress.*

LETTER FROM CLARENCE LINDEN, ESQ., TO THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD.

Hotel ——, *Calais.*

"My Dear Duke,—After your kind letter, you will forgive me for not having called upon you before I left England—for you have led me to hope that I may dispense with ceremony towards you; and, in sad and sober earnest, I was in no mood to visit even you during the few days I was in London, previous to my departure. Some French philosopher has said that, 'the best compliment we can pay our friends, when in sickness or misfortune, is to avoid them.' I will not say how far I disagree with this sentiment, but I know that a French philosopher will be an

unanswerable authority with you; and so I will take shelter even under the battery of an enemy.

"I am waiting here for some days in expectation of Lord Aspeden's arrival. Sick as I was of England and all that has lately occurred to me there, I was glad to have an opportunity of leaving it sooner than my chief could do; and I amuse myself very indifferently in this dull town, with reading all the morning, plays all the evening, and dreams of my happier friends all the night.

"And so you are sorry that I did not destroy Lord Borodaile. My dear duke, you would have been much more sorry if I had! What could you then have done for a living Pasquin for your stray lampoons and vagrant sarcasms? Had an unfortunate bullet carried away

That peer of England—pillar of the state,

as you term him, pray *on* whom could 'Duke Humphrey unfold his griefs'?—Ah, duke, better as it is, believe me; and, whenever you are at a loss for a subject for wit, you will find cause to bless my forbearance, and congratulate yourself upon the existence of its object.

"Dare I hope that, amidst all the gaieties which court you, you will find time to write to me? If so, you shall have in return the earliest intelligence of every new soprano, and the most elaborate criticisms on every budding *figurante* of our court.

"Have you met Trollolop lately—and in what new pursuit are his intellectual energies engaged? There, you see, I have fairly entrapped your Grace into a question which common courtesy will oblige you to answer.

"Adieu, ever, my dear duke,

"Most truly yours," &c.

LETTER FROM THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD TO CLARENCE LINDEN, ESQ.

"A THOUSAND thanks, *mon cher*, for your letter, though it was certainly less amusing and animated than I could

have wished it for your sake, as well as my own; yet it could not have been more welcomely received, had it been as witty as your conversation itself. I heard that you had accepted the place of secretary to Lord Aspeden, and that you had passed through London on your way to the Continent, looking—(the amiable Callythorpe, 'who never flatters,' is my authority)—more like a ghost than yourself. So you may be sure, my dear Linden, that I was very anxious to be convinced under your own hand, of your carnal existence.

"Take care of yourself, my good fellow, and don't imagine, as I am apt to do, that youth is like my hunter, Fearnought, and will carry you over everything. In return for your philosophical maxim, I will give you another. 'In age we should remember that we *have been* young, and in youth, that we are *to be* old.' Ehem!—am I not profound as a moralist? I think a few such sentences would become my long face well; and, to say truth, I am tired of being witty—every one thinks he can be that—so I will borrow Trollolop's philosophy—take snuff, wear a wig out of curl, and grow wise instead of merry.

"*À propos* of Trollolop; let me not forget that you honour him with your inquiries. I saw him three days since, and he asked me if I had been impressed lately with the idea vulgarly called Clarence Linden; and then he proceeded to inform me that he had heard the atoms which composed your frame were about to be resolved into a new form. While I was knitting my brows very wisely at this intelligence, he passed on to apprise me that I had neither length, breadth, nor extension, nor any thing but mind. Flattered by so delicate a compliment to my understanding, I yielded my assent; and he then shifted his ground, and told me that there was no such thing as mind—that we were but modifications of matter—and that, in a word, I was all body. I took advantage of this doctrine, and forthwith removed my modification of matter from his.

"Findlater has just lost his younger brother in a duel.

You have no idea how shocking it was. Sir Christopher one day heard his brother, who had just entered the —— dragoons, ridiculed for his want of spirit, by Major Elton, who professed to be the youth's best friend. The honest heart of our worthy baronet was shocked beyond measure at this perfidy, and the next time his brother mentioned Elton's name with praise, out came the story. You may guess the rest: young Findlater called out Elton, who shot him through the lungs!—'I did it for the best,' cried Sir Christopher.

"*La pauvre petite Meronville!* What an Ariadne! Just as I was thinking to play the Bacchus to your Theseus, up steps an old gentleman from Yorkshire, who hears it is fashionable to marry *bonas robas*, proposes honourable matrimony, and deprives me and the world of La Meronville! The wedding took place on Monday last, and the happy pair set out to their seat in the North. Verily, we shall have quite a new race in the next generation—I expect all the babes will skip into the world with a *pas de zephyr*, singing in sweet trebles—

'Little dancing loves we are!
—Who the deuce is our papa?'

"I think you will be surprised to hear that Lord Borodaile is beginning to thaw—I saw him smile the other day! Certainly, we are not so near the North Pole as we were! He is going, and so am I, in the course of the autumn, to your old friends the Westboroughs. Report says that he is *un peu épris de la belle Flore;* but, then, Report is such a liar! For my own part I always contradict her.

"I eagerly embrace your offer of correspondence, and assure you that there are few people by whose friendship I conceive myself so much honoured as by yours. You will believe this; for you know that, like Callythorpe, I never flatter.—Farewell for the present.

"Sincerely yours,

"HAVERFIELD."

CHAPTER LVI.

Q. Eliz.—Shall I be tempted of the devil thus?
K. Rich.—Ay, if the devil tempt thee to do good.
Q. Eliz.—Shall I forget myself to be myself—SHAKSPEARE.

IT wanted one hour to midnight, as Crauford walked slowly to the lonely and humble street where he had appointed his meeting with Glendower. It was a stormy and fearful night. The day had been uncommonly sultry, and as it died away, thick masses of cloud came labouring along the air, which lay heavy and breathless, as if under a spell —as if in those dense and haggard vapours the rider of the storm sat, like an incubus, upon the atmosphere beneath, and paralysed the motion and wholesomeness of the sleeping winds. And about the hour of twilight, or rather when twilight should have been, instead of its quiet star, from one obscure corner of the heavens flashed a solitary gleam of lightning, lingered a moment,

> And ere a man had power to say, Behold!
> The jaws of darkness did devour it up.

But then, as if awakened from a torpor by a signal universally acknowledged, from the courts and quarters of heaven, came, blaze after blaze, and peal upon peal, the light and voices of the Elements when they walk abroad. The rain fell not: all was dry and arid: the mood of Nature seemed not gentle enough for tears: and the lightning, livid and forked, flashed from the sullen clouds with a deadly fierceness, made trebly perilous by the panting drought and stagnation of the air. The streets were empty and silent, as if the huge city had been doomed and delivered to the wrath of the tempest—and ever and anon the lightnings paused upon the housetops, shook and quivered as if meditating their stroke, and then, baffled as it were,

by some superior and guardian agency, vanished into their gloomy tents, and made their next descent from some opposite corner of the skies.

It was a remarkable instance of the force with which a cherished object occupies the thoughts, and of the all-sufficiency of the human mind to itself, the slowness and unconsciousness of danger with which Crauford, a man luxurious as well as naturally timid, moved amidst the angry fires of heaven and brooded, undisturbed and sullenly serene, over the project at his heart.

"A rare night for our meeting," thought he; "I suppose he will not fail me. Now let me con over my task. I must not tell him all yet. Such babes must be led into error before they can walk—just a little inkling will suffice—a glimpse into the arcana of my scheme. Well, it is indeed fortunate that I met him, for verily I am surrounded with danger, and a very little delay in the assistance I am forced to seek might exalt me to a higher elevation than the peerage."

Such was the meditation of this man, as with a slow, shuffling walk, characteristic of his mind, he proceeded to the appointed spot.

A cessation of unusual length in the series of the lightnings, and the consequent darkness, against which the dull and scanty lamps vainly struggled, prevented Crauford and another figure approaching from the opposite quarter, seeing each other till they almost touched. Crauford stopped abruptly.

"Is it you?" said he.

"It is a man who has outlived fortune!" answered Glendower, in the exaggerated and metaphorical language which the thoughts of men who imagine warmly, and are excited powerfully, so often assume.

"Then," rejoined Crauford, "you are the more suited for my purpose. A little urging of necessity behind is a marvellous whetter of the appetite to danger before.—He! he!" And as he said this, his low chuckling laugh jarringly

enough contrasted with the character of the night and his companion.

Glendower replied not: a pause ensued; and the lightning, which, spreading on a sudden from east to west, hung over the city a burning and ghastly canopy,—showed the face of each to the other, working and almost haggard, as it was, with the conception of dark thoughts, and rendered wan and unearthly by the spectral light in which it was beheld. "It is an awful night," said Glendower.

"True," answered Crauford—"a very awful night; but we are all safe under the care of Providence. Jesus! what a flash! Think you it is a favourable opportunity for our conversation?"

"Why not?" said Glendower; "what have the thunders and the wrath of Heaven to do with us?"

"H—e—m! h—e—m! God sees all things," rejoined Crauford, "and avenges Himself on the guilty by His storms!"

"Ay; but those are the storms of the heart! I tell you that even the innocent may have that within to which the loudest tempests without are peace! But guilt, you say—what have *we* to do with guilt?"

Crauford hesitated, and, avoiding any reply to this question, drew Glendower's arm within his own, and in a low, half-whispered tone said—

"Glendower, survey mankind; look with a passionless and unprejudiced eye upon the scene which moves around us: what do you see anywhere but the same re-acted and eternal law of nature—all, all preying upon each other? Or if there be a solitary individual who refrains, he is as a man without a common badge, without a marriage garment, and the rest trample him under foot! Glendower, *you* are such a man! Now hearken, I will deceive you not; I honour you too much to beguile you, even to your own good. I own to you fairly and at once, that in the scheme I shall unfold to you, there may be something repugnant to the factitious and theoretical principles of education—

something hostile to the prejudices, though not to the reasonings, of the mind; but—"

"Hold!" said Glendower abruptly, pausing and fixing his bold and searching eye upon the tempter; "hold!—there will be no need of argument or refinement in this case: tell me at once your scheme, and at once I will accept or reject it!"

"Gently," said Crauford; "to all deeds of contract there is a preamble. Listen to me yet farther: when I have ceased, I will listen to you. It is in vain that you place man in cities—it is in vain that you fetter him with laws—it is in vain that you pour into his mind the light of an imperfect morality, of a glimmering wisdom, of an ineffectual religion: in all places he is the same—the same savage and crafty being, who makes the passions which rule himself the tools of his conquest over others! There is in all creation but one evident law—self-preservation! Split it as you like into hairbreadths and atoms, it is still fundamentally and essentially unaltered. Glendower, that self-preservation is our bond now. Of myself I do not at present speak—I refer only to you: self-preservation commands you to place implicit confidence in me; it impels you to abjure indigence, by accepting the proposal I am about to make to you."

"You, as yet, speak enigmas," said Glendower; "but they are sufficiently clear to tell me their sense is not such as I have heard you utter."

"You are right. Truth is not always safe—safe either to others, or to ourselves! But I dare open to you now my real heart: look in it—I dare say that you will behold charity, benevolence, piety to God, love and friendship at this moment to yourself; but I own, also, that you will behold there a determination—which to me seems courage—not to be the only idle being in the world, where all are busy; or, worse still, to be the only one engaged in a perilous and uncertain game, and yet shunning to employ all the arts of which he is master. I will own to you that,

long since, had I been foolishly inert, I should have been at this moment, more penniless and destitute than yourself. I live happy, respected, wealthy! I enjoy in their widest range the blessings of life. I dispense those blessings to others. Look round the world—whose name stands fairer than mine? whose hand relieves more of human distresses? whose tongue preaches purer doctrines? None, Glendower, none. I offer to you means not dissimilar to those I have chosen—fortunes not unequal to those I possess. Nothing but the most unjustifiable fastidiousness will make you hesitate to accept my offer."

"You cannot expect that I have met you this night with a resolution to be unjustifiably fastidious," said Glendower, with a hollow and cold smile.

Crauford did not immediately answer, for he was considering whether it was yet the time for disclosing the important secret. While he was deliberating, the sullen clouds began to break from their suspense. A double darkness gathered around, and a few large drops fell on the ground in token of a more general discharge about to follow from the floodgates of heaven. The two men moved onward, and took shelter under an old arch. Crauford first broke silence. "Hist," said he—"hist—do you hear anything?"

"Yes! I heard the winds and the rain, and the shaking houses, and the plashing pavements, and the reeking housetops—nothing more."

Looking long and anxiously around to certify himself that none was indeed the witness of their conference, Crauford approached close to Glendower, and laid his hand heavily upon his arm. At that moment a vivid and lengthened flash of lightning shot through the ruined arch, and gave to Crauford's countenance a lustre which Glendower almost started to behold. The face, usually so smooth, calm, bright in complexion, and almost inexpressive from its extreme composure, now agitated by the excitement of the moment, and tinged by the ghastly light of the skies, became literally fearful. The cold blue eye glared out from

its socket—the lips blanched, and, parting in the act to speak, showed the white glistening teeth; and the corners of the mouth, drawn down in a half sneer, gave to the cheeks, rendered green and livid by the lightning, a lean and hollow appearance contrary to their natural shape.

"It is," said Crauford, in a whispered but distinct tone, "a perilous secret that I am about to disclose to you. I indeed have no concern in it, but my lords the judges have, and you will not therefore be surprised if I forestall the ceremonies of their court, and require an oath."

Then, his manner and voice suddenly changing into an earnest and deep solemnity, as excitement gave him an eloquence more impressive, because unnatural to his ordinary moments, he continued: "By those lightnings and commotions above—by the heavens in which they revel in their terrible sports—by the earth, whose towers they crumble, and herbs they blight, and creatures they blast into cinders at their will—by Him whom, whatever be the name he bears, all men in the living world worship and tremble before—by whatever is sacred in this great and mysterious universe, and at the peril of whatever can wither and destroy, and curse—swear to preserve inviolable and for ever the secret I shall whisper in your ear!"

The profound darkness which now, in the pause of the lightning, wrapt the scene, hid from Crauford all sight of the effect he had produced, and even the very outline of Glendower's figure; but the gloom made more distinct the voice which thrilled through it upon Crauford's ear.

"Promise me that there is not dishonour, nor crime, which is dishonour, in this confidence, and I swear."

Crauford ground his teeth. He was about to reply impetuously, but he checked himself. "I am not going," thought he, "to communicate my own share of this plot, but merely to state that a plot does exist, and then to point out in what manner he can profit by it—so far, therefore, there is no guilt in his concealment, and, consequently, no excuse for him to break his vow."

Rapidly running over this self-argument, he said aloud: "I promise!"

"And," rejoined Glendower, "I swear!"

At the close of this sentence another flash of lightning again made darkness visible, and Glendower, beholding the countenance of his companion, again recoiled; for its mingled haggardness and triumph seemed to his excited imagination the very expression of a fiend!—"Now," said Crauford, relapsing into his usual careless tone, somewhat enlivened by his sneer, "now, then, you must not interrupt me in my disclosure by those starts and exclamations which break from your philosophy like sparks from flint. Hear me throughout."

And, bending down, till his mouth reached Glendower's ear, he commenced his recital. Artfully hiding his own agency, the master-spring of the gigantic machinery of fraud, which, too mighty for a single hand, required an assistant—throwing into obscurity the sin, while, knowing the undaunted courage and desperate fortunes of the man, he did not affect to conceal the danger—expatiating upon the advantages, the immense and almost inexhaustible resources of wealth which his scheme suddenly opened upon one in the deepest abyss of poverty, and slightly sketching, as if to excite vanity, the ingenuity and genius by which the scheme originated, and could only be sustained—Crauford's detail of temptation, in its knowledge of human nature, in its adaptation of act to principles, in its web-like craft of self-concealment, and the speciousness of its lure, was indeed a splendid masterpiece of villanous invention.

But while Glendower listened, and his silence flattered Crauford's belief of victory, not for one single moment did a weak or yielding desire creep around his heart. Subtly as the scheme was varnished, and scarce a tithe of its comprehensive enormity unfolded, the strong and acute mind of one long accustomed to unravel sophistry and gaze on the loveliness of truth, saw at once that the scheme proposed was one of the most unmingled treachery and baseness.

Sick, chilled, withering at heart, Glendower leant against the damp wall; as every word which the tempter fondly imagined was irresistibly confirming its purpose, tore away the last prop to which, in the credulity of hope, the student had clung, and mocked while it crushed the fondness of his belief.

Crauford ceased, and stretched forth his hand to grasp Glendower's. He felt it not. "You do not speak, my friend," said he; "do you deliberate, or have you not decided?" Still no answer came. Surprised, and half alarmed, he turned round, and perceived by a momentary flash of lightning, that Glendower had risen, and was moving away towards the mouth of the arch.

"Good Heavens! Glendower," cried Crauford, "where are you going?"

"Anywhere," cried Glendower, in a sudden paroxysm of indignant passion, "anywhere in this great globe of suffering, so that the agonies of my human flesh and heart are not polluted by the accents of crime! And such crime! Why, I would rather go forth into the highways, and win bread by the sharp knife, and the death-struggle, than sink my soul in such mire and filthiness of sin. Fraud—fraud—treachery! Merciful Father! what can be my state, when these are supposed to tempt me!"

Astonished and aghast, Crauford remained rooted to the spot.

"Oh!" continued Glendower—and his noble nature was wrung to the utmost; "Oh, MAN—MAN! that I should have devoted my best and freshest years to the dream of serving thee! In my boyish enthusiasm, in my brief day of pleasure and of power, in the intoxication of love, in the reverse of fortune, in the squalid and obscure chambers of degradation and poverty, that one hope animated, cheered, sustained me through all! In temptation did this hand belie, or in sickness did this brain forego, or in misery did this heart forget, thy great and advancing cause? In the wide world, is there one being whom I have injured,

even in thought—one being who, in the fellowship of want, should not have drunk of my cup, or broken with me the last morsel of my bread?—and now—now, is it come to this?"

And, hiding his face with his hands, he gave way to a violence of feeling before which the weaker nature of Crauford stood trembling and abashed. It lasted not long; he raised his head from its drooping posture, and, as he stood at the entrance of the arch, a prolonged flash from the inconstant skies shone full upon his form. Tall, erect, still, the gloomy and ruined walls gave his colourless countenance and haughty stature in bold and distinct relief; all trace of the past passion had vanished; perfectly calm and set, his features borrowed even dignity from their marble paleness, and the marks of suffering, which the last few months had writ in legible characters on the cheek and brow. Seeking out, with an eye to which the intolerable lightnings seemed to have lent something of their fire, the cowering and bending form of his companion, he said—

"Go home, miserable derider of the virtue you cannot understand—go to your luxurious and costly home—go and repine that human nature is not measured by your mangled and crippled laws;—amidst men, yet more fallen than I am, hope to select your victim—amidst prisons, and hovels, and roofless sheds—amidst rags and destitution, and wretches made mad by hunger, hope that you may find a villain.—I leave you to that hope, and—to remembrance!"

As Glendower moved away, Crauford recovered himself. Rendered desperate by the vital necessity of procuring some speedy aid in his designs, and not yet perfectly persuaded by the fallacy of his former judgment, he was resolved not to suffer Glendower thus easily to depart. Smothering his feelings by an effort violent even to his habitual hypocrisy, he sprang forward and laid his hand upon Glendower's shoulder.

"Stay, stay," said he, in a soothing and soft voice; "you have wronged me greatly. I pardon your warmth—nay,

I honour it; but hereafter you will repent your judgment of me. At least, do justice to my intentions. Was I an actor in the scheme proposed to you?—what was it to me? Was I in the smallest degree to be benefited by it? Could I have any other motive than affection for you? If I erred, it was from a different view of the question; but is it not the duty of a friend to find expedients for distress, and to leave to the distressed person the right of accepting or rejecting them? But let this drop for ever—partake of my fortune—be my adopted brother. Here, I have hundreds about me at this moment; take them all, and own at least that I meant you well."

Feeling that Glendower, who at first had vainly endeavoured to shake off his hand, now turned towards him, though at the moment it was too dark to see his countenance, the wily speaker continued—"Yes, Glendower, if by that name I must alone address you, take all I have—there is no one in this world dearer to me than you are. I am a lonely and disappointed man, without children or ties. I sought out a friend who might be my brother in life, and my heir in death. I found you—be that to me!"

"I am faint and weak," said Glendower, slowly, "and I believe my senses cannot be clear; but a minute since, and you spoke at length, and with a terrible distinctness, words which it polluted my very ear to catch, and *now* you speak as if you loved me. Will please you to solve the riddle?"

"The truth is this," said Crauford: "I knew your pride—I feared you would not accept a permanent pecuniary aid, even from friendship. I was driven, therefore, to devise some plan of independence for you. I could think of no plan but that which I proposed. You speak of it as wicked: it may be so; but it seemed not wicked to me. I may have formed a wrong—I own it is a peculiar—system of morals; but it is, at least, sincere. Judging of my proposal by that system, I saw no sin in it. I saw, too, much less danger than, in the honesty of my heart, I spoke of. In a similar distress, I solemnly swear, I myself would

have adopted a similar relief. Nor is this all; the plan proposed would have placed thousands in your power. Forgive me if I thought your life, and the lives of those most dear to you, of greater value than these sums to the persons defrauded—ay—defrauded, if you will: forgive me if I thought that with these thousands you would effect far more good to the community than their legitimate owners. Upon these grounds, and on some others, too tedious now to state, I justified my proposal to my conscience. Pardon me, I again beseech you; accept my last proposal; be my partner, my friend, my heir; and forget a scheme never proposed to you, if I had hoped (what I hope now) that you would accept the alternative which it is my pride to offer, and which you are not justified, even by pride, to refuse."

"Great Source of all knowledge!" ejaculated Glendower, scarce audibly, and to himself. "Supreme and unfathomable God!—dost Thou most loathe or pity Thine abased creatures, walking in their dim reason upon this little earth, and sanctioning fraud, treachery, crime, upon a principle borrowed from Thy laws! Oh! when—when will Thy full light of wisdom travel down to us, and guilt and sorrow, and this world's evil mysteries, roll away like vapours before the blaze?"

"I do not hear you, my friend," said Crauford. "Speak aloud; you will—I feel you will, accept my offer, and become my brother!"

"Away!" said Glendower; "I will not."

"He wanders—his brain is touched!" muttered Crauford, and then resumed aloud—"Glendower, we are both unfit for talk at present—both unstrung by our late jar. You will meet me again to-morrow, perhaps. I will accompany you now to your door."

"Not a step: our paths are different."

"Well, well, if you will have it so, be it as you please. I have offended; you have a right to punish me, and play the churl to-night; but your address?"

"Yonder," said Glendower, pointing to the heavens. "Come to me a month hence, and you will find me *there!*"

"Nay, nay, my friend, your brain is heated; but you leave me? Well, as I said, your will is mine—at least take some of these paltry notes in earnest of our bargain; remember when next we meet you will share all I have."

"You remind me," said Glendower, quietly, "that we have old debts to settle. When last I saw you, you lent me a certain sum—there it is—take it—count it—there is but one poor guinea gone. Fear not—even to the uttermost farthing you shall be repaid."

"Why, why, this is unkind, ungenerous. Stay, stay,—" but, waving his hand impatiently, Glendower darted away, and passing into another street, the darkness effectually closed upon his steps.

"Fool! fool! that I am," cried Crauford, stamping vehemently on the ground—"in what point did my wit fail me, that I could not win one whom very hunger had driven into my net? But I must yet find him—and I will—the police shall be set to work: these half confidences may ruin me. And how deceitful he has proved—to talk more diffidently than a whining harlot upon virtue, and yet be so stubborn upon trial. Dastard that I am, too, as well as fool—I felt sunk into the dust by his voice. But, pooh, I must have him yet; your worst villains make the most noise about the first step. True, that I cannot storm, but I will undermine. But, wretch that I am, I must win him, or another soon, or I perish on the gibbet. Out, base thought!"

CHAPTER LVII.

Formam quidem ipsam, Marce fili, et tanquam faciem honesti vides: quæ, si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientia.[1]—TULL.

IT was almost dawn when Glendower returned to his home. Fearful of disturbing his wife, he stole with mute steps to the damp and rugged chamber, where the last son of a princely line, and the legitimate owner of lands and halls which ducal rank might have envied, held his miserable asylum. The first faint streaks of coming light broke through the shutterless and shattered windows, and he saw that *she* reclined in a deep sleep upon the chair beside their child's couch. She would not go to bed herself till Glendower returned, and she had sat up, watching and praying, and listening for his footsteps, till, in the utter exhaustion of debility and sickness, sleep had fallen upon her. Glendower bent over her.

"Sleep," said he, "sleep on! The wicked do not come to thee now. Thou art in a world that has no fellowship with this—a world from which even happiness is not banished! Nor woe, nor pain, nor memory of the past, nor despair of all before thee, make the characters of thy present state! Thou forestallest the forgetfulness of the grave, and thy heart concentrates all earth's comfort in one word —'Oblivion!' Beautiful, *how* beautiful thou art even yet! —that smile, that momentary blush, years have not conquered *them*. They are as when, my young bride, thou didst lean first on my bosom, and dream that sorrow was no more! And I have brought thee unto this! These green walls make thy bridal chamber—yon fragments of bread thy bridal board. Well! it is no matter! thou art

[1] Son Marcus, you see the form and as it were the face of Virtue —that Wisdom, which if it could be perceived by the eyes, would (as Plato saith) kindle absolute and marvellous affection.

on thy way to a land where all things, even a breaking heart, are at rest. I weep not; wherefore should I weep? Tears are not for the dead, but their survivors. I would rather see thee drop inch by inch into the grave, and smile as I beheld it, than save thee for an inheritance of sin. What is there in this little and sordid life that we should strive to hold it? What in this dreadful dream that we should fear to wake?"

And Glendower knelt beside his wife, and, despite his words, tears flowed fast and gushingly down his cheeks; and wearied as he was, he watched upon her slumbers, till they fell from the eyes to which his presence was more joyous than the day.

It was a beautiful thing, even in sorrow, to see that couple, whom want could not debase, nor misfortune, which makes even generosity selfish, divorce! All that Fate had stripped from the poetry and graces of life, had not shaken one leaf from the romance of their green and unwithered affections! They were the very type of love in its holiest and most enduring shape; their hearts had grown together —their being had flowed through caves and deserts, and reflected the storms of an angry Heaven; but its waters had indisolubly mingled into one! Young, gifted, noble, and devoted, they were worthy victims of this blighting and bitter world! Their garden was turned into a wilderness; but, like our first parents, it was hand in hand that they took their solitary way! Evil beset them, but they swerved not; the rains and the winds fell upon their unsheltered heads, but they were not bowed; and through the mazes and briars of this weary life, their bleeding footsteps strayed not, *for they had a clue!* The mind seemed, as it were, to become visible and *external* as the frame decayed, and to cover the body with something of its own invulnerable power; so that whatever should have attacked the mortal and frail part, fell upon that which, imperishable and divine, resisted and subdued it!

It was unfortunate for Glendower that he never again

met Wolfe; for neither fanaticism of political faith, nor sternness of natural temper, subdued in the republican the real benevolence and generosity which redeemed and elevated his character: nor could any impulse of party zeal have induced him, like Crauford, systematically to take advantage of poverty in order to tempt to participation in the schemes. From a more evil companion Glendower had not yet escaped: Crauford, by some means or other, found out his abode, and lost no time in availing himself of the discovery. In order fully to comprehend his unwearied persecution of Glendower, it must constantly be remembered that to this persecution he was bound by a necessity which, urgent, dark, and implicating life itself, rendered him callous to every obstacle, and unsusceptible of all remorse. With the exquisite tact which he possessed, he never openly recurred to his former proposal of fraud; he contented himself with endeavouring to persuade Glendower to accept pecuniary assistance: but in vain. The veil once torn from his character, no craft could restore. Through all his pretences, and sevenfold hypocrisy, Glendower penetrated at once into his real motives: he was not to be duped by assurances of friendship which he knew the very dissimilarities between their natures rendered impossible. He had seen at the first, despite all allegations to the contrary, that in the fraud Crauford had proposed, that person could by no means be an uninfluenced and cold adviser. In after conversations, Crauford, driven, by the awful interest he had in success, for his usual consummateness of duplicity, betrayed in various important minutiæ how deeply he was implicated in the crime for which he had argued; and not even the visible and progressive decay of his wife and child could force the stern mind of Glendower into accepting those wages of iniquity which he knew well were only offered as an earnest or a snare.

There is a royalty in extreme suffering, when the mind falls not with the fortunes, which no hardihood of vice can violate unabashed. Often and often, humble and defeated,

through all his dissimulation, was Crauford driven from the presence of the man whom it was his bitterest punishment to fear most when most he affected to despise; and *as* often recollecting his powers and fortifying himself in his experience of human frailty when sufficiently tried, did he return to his attempts. He waylaid the door and watched the paths of his intended prey. He knew that the mind which even best repels temptation first urged, hath seldom power to resist the same suggestion, if daily—dropping,—unwearying,—presenting itself in every form,—obtruded in every hour,—losing its horror by custom,—and finding in the rebellious bosom itself its smoothest vizard and most alluring excuse. And it was, indeed, a mighty and perilous trial to Glendower, when rushing from the presence of his wife and child—when fainting under accumulated evils—when almost delirious with sickening and heated thought, to hear at each prompting of the wrung and excited nature, each heave of the black fountain that in no mortal breast is utterly exhausted, one smooth, soft, persuasive voice for ever whispering, "Relief!"—relief, certain, utter, instantaneous!—the voice of one pledged never to relax an effort or spare a pang, by a danger to himself, a danger of shame and death—the voice of one who never spoke but in friendship and compassion, profound in craft, and a very sage in the disguises with which language invests deeds. But Virtue has resources buried in itself, which we know not, till the invading hour calls them from their retreats. Surrounded by hosts without, and when Nature itself, turned traitor, is its most deadly enemy within; it assumes a new and a superhuman power, which is greater than Nature itself. Whatever be its creed—whatever be its sect—from whatever segment of the globe its orisons arise, Virtue is God's empire, and from His throne of thrones He will defend it. Though cast into the distant earth, and struggling on the dim arena of a human heart, all things above are spectators of its conflict or enlisted in its cause. The angels have their charge over it—the banners of archangels

are on its side; and from sphere to sphere, through the illimitable ether, and around the impenetrable darkness at the feet of God, its triumph is hymned by harps which are strung to the glories of the Creator!

One evening when Crauford had joined Glendower in his solitary wanderings, the dissembler renewed his attacks.

"But why not," said he, "accept from my friendship what to my benevolence you would deny? I couple with my offers, my prayers rather, no conditions. How then *do* you, *can* you, reconcile it to your conscience, to suffer your wife and child to perish before your eyes?"

"Man—man," said Glendower, "tempt me no more—let them die! At present the worst is death—what you offer me is dishonour."

"Heavens—how uncharitable is this! Can you call the mere act of accepting money from one who loves you dishonour?"

"It is in vain that you varnish your designs," said Glendower, stopping, and fixing his eyes upon him. "Do you not think that cunning ever betrays itself? In a thousand words—in a thousand looks, which have escaped *you*, but not *me*, I know that, if there be one being on this earth whom you hate and would injure, that being is myself. Nay, start not—listen to me patiently. I have sworn that it is the last opportunity you shall have. I will not subject myself to farther temptation: I am now sane; but there are things which may drive me mad, and in madness you might conquer. You hate me: it is out of the nature of earthly things that you should not. But even were it otherwise, do you think that I could believe you would come from your voluptuous home to these miserable retreats; that, among the lairs of beggary and theft, you would lie in wait to allure me to forsake poverty without a stronger motive than love for one who affects it not for you? I know you—I have read your heart—I have penetrated into that stronger motive—it is your own safety. In the system of atrocity you proposed to me, you are the principal.

You have already bared to me enough of the extent to which that system reaches, to convince me that a single miscreant, however ingenious, cannot, unassisted, support it with impunity. You want help; I am he in whom you have dared to believe that you could find it. You are detected—now be undeceived!"

"Is it so?" said Crauford; and as he saw that it was no longer possible to feign, the poison of his heart broke forth in its full venom. The fiend rose from the reptile, and stood exposed in its natural shape. Returning Glendower's stern but lofty gaze with an eye to which all evil passions lent their unholy fire, he repeated, "Is it so?—then you are more penetrating than I thought; but it is indifferent to me. It was for your sake, not mine, most righteous man, that I wished you might have a disguise to satisfy the modesty of your punctilios. It is all one to Richard Crauford whether you go blindfold or with open eyes into his snare. Go you must and *shall.* Ay, frowns will not awe me. You have desired the truth; you shall have it. You are right; I hate you—hate you with a soul whose force of hatred you cannot dream of. Your pride, your stubbornness, your coldness of heart, which things that would stir the blood of beggars cannot warm—your icy and passionless virtue—I hate—I hate all! You are right also, most wise inquisitor, in supposing that in the scheme proposed to you, I am the principal—I am! You were to be the tool, and *shall.* I have offered you mild inducements—pleas to soothe the technicalities of your conscience—you have rejected them—be it so. Now choose between my first offer and the gibbet. Ay, the gibbet! That night on which we made the appointment which shall not yet be in vain—on that night you stopped me in the street—you demanded money—you robbed me—I will swear it—I will prove it. Now, then, tremble, man of morality—dupe of your own strength—you are in my power—tremble! Yet in *my* safety is your escape—I am generous. I repeat my original offer—wealth, as great as you

will demand, or—the gibbet—the gibbet—do I speak loud enough?—do you hear?"

"Poor fool!" said Glendower, laughing scornfully, and moving away. But when Crauford, partly in mockery, partly in menace, placed his hand upon Glendower's shoulder, as if to stop him, the touch seemed to change his mood from scorn to fury—turning abruptly round, he seized the villain's throat with a giant's strength, and cried out, while his whole countenance worked beneath the tempestuous wrath within, "What if I squeeze out thy poisonous life from thee this moment!"—and then once more bursting into a withering laughter, as he surveyed the terror which he had excited, he added, "No, no: thou art too vile!" —and, dashing the hypocrite against the wall of a neighbouring house, he strode away.

Recovering himself slowly, and trembling with rage and fear, Crauford gazed round, expecting yet to find he had sported too far with the passions he had sought to control. When, however, he had fully satisfied himself that Glendower was gone, all his wrathful and angry feelings returned with redoubled force. But their most biting torture was the consciousness of their impotence. For after the first paroxysm of rage had subsided, he saw, too clearly, that his threat could not be executed without incurring the most imminent danger of discovery. High as his character stood, it was possible that no charge against him might excite suspicion, but a word might cause inquiry—and inquiry would be ruin. Forced, therefore, to stomach his failure, his indignation, his shame, his hatred, and his vengeance, his own heart became a punishment almost adequate to his vices.

"But my foe will die," said he, clenching his fist so firmly that the nails almost brought blood from the palm; "he will starve, famish, and see them—his wife, his child —perish first! I shall have my triumph, though I shall not witness it. But now, away to my villa: there at least, will be some one whom I can mock, and beat, and trample,

if I will! *Would—would—would that I were that very man, destitute as he is!* His neck, at least, is safe: if he dies, it will not be upon the gallows, nor among the hootings of the mob! Oh, horror! horror! What are my villa, my wine, my women, with that black thought, ever following me like a shadow? Who—who, while an avalanche is sailing over him, who would sit down to feast?"

Leaving this man to shun or be overtaken by Fate, we return to Glendower. It its needless to say that Crauford visited him no more; and, indeed, shortly afterwards Glendower again changed his home. But every day and every hour brought new strength to the disease which was creeping and burning through the veins of the devoted wife; and Glendower, who saw, on earth, nothing before them but a gaol, from which, as yet, they had been miraculously delivered, repined not as he beheld her approach to a gentler and benigner home. Often he sat, as she was bending over their child, and gazed upon her cheek with an insane and fearful joy at the characters which consumption had there engraved; but when she turned towards him her fond eyes (those deep wells of love, in which truth lay hid, and which neither languor nor disease could exhaust), the unnatural hardness of his heart melted away, and he would rush from the house, to give vent to the agony against which fortitude and manhood were in vain.

There was no hope for their distress. His wife had, unknown to Glendower (for she dreaded his pride), written several times to a relation, who, though distant, was still the nearest in blood which fate had spared her, but ineffectually; the scions of a large and illegitimate family, which surrounded him, utterly prevented the success, and generally interrupted the application, of any claimant on his riches but themselves. Glendower, whose temper had ever kept him aloof from all but the commonest acquaintances, knew no human being to apply to. Utterly unable to avail himself of the mine which his knowledge and talents should have proved—sick, and despondent at heart, and

debarred by the loftiness of honour, or rather principle that nothing could quell, from any unlawful means of earning bread, which to most minds would have been rendered excusable by the urgency of nature, Glendower marked the days drag on in dull and protracted despair, and envied every corpse that he saw borne to the asylum in which all earth's hopes seemed centred and confined.

CHAPTER LVIII.

For ours was not like earthly love.
And must this parting be our very last?
No! I shall love thee still when death itself is past.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Hush'd were his Gertrude's lips! but still their bland
And beautiful expression seem'd to melt
With love that could not die! and still his hand
She presses to the heart, no more that felt.
Ah, heart! where once each fond affection dwelt.—CAMPBELL.

"I WONDER," said Mr. Brown to himself, as he spurred his shaggy pony to a speed very unusual to the steady habits of either party—"I wonder where I shall find him. I would not for the late Lady Waddilove's best diamond cross have anybody forestall me in the news. To think of my young master dying so soon after my last visit, or rather my last visit but one—and to think of the old gentleman taking on so, and raving about his injustice to the rightful possessor, and saying that he is justly punished and asking me so eagerly if I could discover the retreat of the late squire, and believing me so implicitly when I undertook to do it, and giving me this letter!" And here Mr. Brown wistfully examined an epistle sealed with black wax, peeping into the corners, which irritated rather than satisfied his curiosity—"I wonder what the old gentleman says in it—I suppose he

will, of course, give up the estate and house. Let me see —that long picture gallery, just built, will, at all events, want furnishing. That would be a famous opportunity to get rid of the Indian jars, and the sofas, and the great Turkey carpet. How lucky that I should just have come in time to get the letter. But let me consider how I shall find out?—an advertisement in the paper? Ah! that's the plan. 'Algernon Mordaunt, Esq.,: something greatly to his advantage—apply to Mr. Brown, &c.' Ah! that will do well, very well. The Turkey carpet won't be quite long enough. I wish I had discovered Mr. Mordaunt's address before, and lent him some money during the young gentleman's life: it would have seemed more generous. However, I can offer it now, before I show the letter. Bless me, it's getting dark. Come, Dobbin, ye-up!" Such were the meditations of the faithful friend of the late Lady Waddilove, as he hastened to London, charged with the task of discovering Mordaunt, and with the delivery of the following epistle:—

"You are, sir, now the heir to that property, which, some years ago, passed from your hands into mine. My son, for whom alone wealth, or, I may say life, was valuable to me, is no more. I only, an old, childless man, stand between you and the estates of Mordaunt. Do not wait for my death to enjoy them. I cannot live here, where everything reminds me of my great and irreparable loss. I shall remove next month into another home. Consider this, then, as once more yours. The house, I believe, you will not find disimproved by my alterations; the mortgages on the estate have been paid off; the former rental you will perhaps allow my steward to account to *you* for, and after my death the present one will be yours. I am informed that you are a proud man, and not likely to receive favours. Be it so, sir!—it is no favour you will receive, but justice—there are circumstances connected with my treaty with your father which have of late vexed my

conscience—and conscience, sir, must be satisfied at any loss. But we shall meet, perhaps, and talk over the past; at present I will not enlarge on it. If you have suffered by me, I am sufficiently punished, and my only hope is to repair your losses.

"I am, &c.,
"H. VAVASOUR MORDAUNT."

Such was the letter, so important to Mordaunt, with which our worthy friend was charged. Bowed to the dust as Vavasour was by the loss of his son, and open to conscience as affliction had made him, he had lived too long for effect, not to be susceptible to its influence, even to the last. Amidst all his grief, and it was intense, there were some whispers of self-exaltation, at the thought of the *éclat* which his generosity and abdication would excite; and, with true worldly morality, the hoped-for plaudits of others gave a triumph, rather than humiliation, to his reconcilement with himself.

To say truth, there were indeed circumstances connected with his treaty with Mordaunt's father, calculated to vex his conscience. He knew that he had not only taken great advantage of Mr. Mordaunt's distress, but that, at his instigation, a paper which could forever have prevented Mr. Mordaunt's sale of the property had been destroyed. These circumstances, during the life of his son, he had endeavoured to forget or to palliate. But grief is rarely dead to remorse; and at the death of that idolised son, the voice at his heart grew imperious, and he lost the power in losing the motive, of reasoning it away.

Mr. Brown's advertisement was unanswered; and, with the zeal and patience of the Christian proselyte's tribe and calling, the good man commenced, in person, a most elaborate and painstaking search. For a long time, his endeavours were so ineffectual, that Mr. Brown, in despair, disposed of the two Indian jars for half their value, and heaved a despondent sigh, whenever he saw the great Turkey carpet

rolled up in his warehouse with as much obstinacy as if it never meant to unroll itself again.

At last, however, by dint of indefatigable and minute investigation, he ascertained that the object of his search had resided in London, under a feigned name; from lodging to lodging, and corner to corner, he tracked him, till at length he made himself master of Mordaunt's present retreat. A joyful look did Mr. Brown cast at the great Turkey carpet, as he passed by it, on his way to his street door, on the morning of his intended visit to Mordaunt. "It is a fine thing to have a good heart," said he, in the true style of Sir Christopher Findlater, and he again eyed the Turkey carpet. "I really feel quite happy at the thought of the pleasure I shall give."

After a walk through as many obscure and filthy *wynds*, and lanes, and alleys, and courts, as were ever threaded by some humble fugitive from justice, the patient Morris came to a sort of court, situated among the miserable hovels in the vicinity of the Tower. He paused, wonderingly, at a dwelling, in which every window was broken, and where the tiles, torn from the roof, lay scattered in forlorn confusion beside the door: where the dingy bricks looked crumbling away, from very age and rottenness, and the fabric, which was of great antiquity, seemed so rocking and infirm, that the eye looked upon its distorted and overhanging position with a sensation of pain and dread; where the very rats had deserted their loathsome cells, from the insecurity of their tenure, and the ragged mothers of the abject neighbourhood forbade their brawling children to wander under the threatening walls, lest they should keep the promise of their mouldering aspect, and, falling, bare to the obstructed and sickly day the secrets of their prison house. Girt with the foul and reeking lairs of that extreme destitution which necessity urges irresistibly into guilt, and excluded, by filthy alleys, and an eternal atmosphere of smoke and rank vapour, from the blessed sun and the pure air of heaven, the miserable mansion seemed set apart for

every disease to crouch within—too perilous even for the hunted criminal—too dreary even for the beggar to prefer it to the bare hedge, or the inhospitable porch beneath whose mockery of shelter the frost of winter had so often numbed him to sleep.

Thrice did the heavy and silver-headed cane of Mr. Brown resound upon the door, over which was a curious carving of a lion dormant, and a date, of which only the two numbers 15 were discernible. Roused by a note so unusual, and an apparition so unwontedly smug as the worthy Morris, a whole legion of dingy and smoke-dried brats came trooping from the surrounding huts, and with many an elvish cry, and strange oath, and cabalistic word, which thrilled the respectable marrow of Mr. Brown, they collected in a gaping, and, to his alarmed eye, a menacing group, as near to the house as their fears and parents would permit them.

"It is very dangerous," thought Mr. Brown, looking shiveringly up at the hanging and tottering roof, "and very appalling," as he turned to the ragged crowd of infant reprobates which began with every moment to increase. At last he summoned courage, and inquired, in a tone, half soothing and half dignified, if they could inform him how to obtain admittance, or how to arouse the inhabitants.

An old crone, leaning out of an opposite window, with matted hair hanging over a begrimed and shrivelled countenance, made answer. "No one," she said, in her peculiar dialect, which the worthy man scarcely comprehended, "lived there, or had done so for years;" but Brown knew better: and while he was asserting the fact, a girl put her head out of another hovel, and said that she had sometimes seen, at the dusk of the evening, a man leave the house, but whether any one else lived in it, she could not tell. Again Mr. Brown sounded an alarm, but no answer came forth, and in great fear and trembling, he applied violent hands to the door; it required but little force; it gave way; he entered; and, jealous of the entrance of the mob

without, reclosed and barred, as well as he was able, the shattered door. The house was *unnaturally* large for the neighbourhood, and Brown was in doubt whether first to ascend a broken and perilous staircase, or search the rooms below; he decided on the latter; he found no one, and with a misgiving heart, which nothing but the recollection of the great Turkey carpet could have inspired, he ascended the quaking steps. All was silent. But a door was unclosed. He entered, and saw the object of his search before him.

Over a pallet bent a form, on which, though youth seemed withered, and even pride broken, the unconquerable soul left somewhat of grace and of glory, that sustained the beholder's remembrance of better days—a child in its first infancy knelt on the nearer side of the bed with clasped hands, and vacant eyes that turned towards the intruder with a listless and lack-lustre gaze. But Glendower, or rather Mordaunt, as he bent over the pallet, spoke not, moved not; his eyes were riveted on one object, his heart seemed turned into stone, and his veins curdled into ice. Awed and chilled by the breathing desolation of the spot, Brown approached, and spoke, he scarcely knew what. "You are," he concluded his address, "the master of Mordaunt Court;" and he placed the letter in the hands of the person he thus greeted.

"Awake, hear me!" cried Algernon to Isabel, as she lay extended on the couch; and the messenger of glad tidings, for the first time seeing her countenance, shuddered, and knew that he was in the chamber of death.

"Awake, my own, own love! Happy days are in store for us yet: our misery is past; you will live, live to bless me in riches, as you have done in want."

Isabel raised her eyes to his, and a smile, sweet, comforting, and full of love, passed the lips which were about to close forever. "Thank Heaven," she murmured, "for your dear sake. It is pleasant to die now, and *thus;*" and she placed the hand that was clasped in her relapsing and wan fingers, within the bosom which had been, for anguished

and hopeless years, his asylum and refuge, and which now, when fortune changed, as if it had only breathed in comfort to his afflictions, was, for the first time, and for ever, to be cold,—cold even to him!

"You will live—you will live," cried Mordaunt, in wild, and incredulous despair—"in mercy live! You, who have been my angel of hope, do not—O God, O God! do not desert me now!"

But that faithful and loving heart was already deaf to his voice, and the film grew darkening and rapidly over the eye, which still, with undying fondness, sought him out through the shade and agony of death. Sense and consciouness were gone, and dim and confused images whirled round her soul, struggling a little moment before they sunk into the depth and silence where the past lies buried. But still mindful of *him*, and grasping, as it were, at his remembrance, she clasped, closer and closer, the icy hand which she held, to her breast. "Your hand is cold, dearest—it is cold," said she, faintly, "but I will warm it *here*!"—and so her spirit passed away, and Mordaunt felt afterwards in a lone and surviving pilgrimage, that her last thought had been kindness to him, and that her last act had spoken forgetfulness even of death, in the tenderness of love!

CHAPTER LIX.

Change and time take together their flight.—*Golden Violet.*

One evening in autumn, about three years after the date of our last chapter, a stranger on horseback, in deep mourning, dismounted at the door of "the Golden Fleece," in the memorable town of W——. He walked into the taproom, and asked for a private apartment and accommodation for the night. The landlady, grown considerably plumper than when we first made her acquaintance, just lifted up her

eyes to the stranger's face, and summoning a short, stout man (formerly the waiter, now the second helpmate of the comely hostess), desired him in a tone which partook somewhat more of the authority indicative of their former relative situations than of the obedience which should have characterised their present, "to show the gentleman to the Griffin, No. Four."

The stranger smiled as the sound greeted his ears, and he followed not so much the host as the hostess's spouse into the apartment thus designated. A young lady, who some eight years ago little thought that she should still be in a state of single blessedness, and who always honoured with an attentive eye the stray travellers who, from their youth, loneliness, or that ineffable air which usually designates the unmarried man, might be in the same solitary state of life, turned to the landlady and said—

"Mother, did you observe what a handsome gentleman that was?"

"No," replied the landlady; "I only observed that he brought no servant."

"I wonder," said the daughter, "if he is in the army?—he has a military air!"

"I suppose he has dined," muttered the landlady to herself, looking towards the larder.

"Have you seen Squire Mordaunt within a short period of time?" asked, somewhat abruptly, a little thick-set man, who was enjoying his pipe and negus in a sociable way at the window-seat. The characteristics of this personage were, a spruce wig, a bottle nose, an elevated eyebrow, a snuff-coloured skin and coat, and an air of that consequential self-respect which distinguishes the philosopher who agrees with the French sage, and sees, "no reason in the world why a man should not esteem himself."

"No, indeed, Mr. Bossolton," returned the landlady; "but I suppose that, as he is now in the parliament house, he will live less retired. It is a pity that the inside of that noble old hall of his should not be more seen—and after all

the old gentleman's improvements, too! They say that the estate now, since the mortgages were paid off, is above ten thousand pounds a year, clear!"

"And if I am not induced into an error," rejoined Mr. Bossolton, refilling his pipe, "old Vavasour left a great sum of ready money besides, which must have been an aid, and an assistance, and an advantage, mark me, Mistress Merrylack, to the owner of Mordaunt Hall, that has escaped the calculation of your faculty,—and the—and the—faculty of your calculation!"

"You mistake, Mr. Boss," as, in the friendliness of diminutives, Mrs. Merrylack sometimes styled the grandiloquent practitioner—"you mistake: the old gentleman left all his ready money in two bequests—the one to the College of ——, in the university of Cambridge, and the other to a hospital in London. I remember the very words of the will—they ran thus, Mr. Boss:—'And whereas my beloved son, had he lived, would have been a member of the College of —— in the university of Cambridge, which he would have adorned by his genius, learning, youthful virtues, and various qualities which did equal honour to his head and heart, and would have rendered him alike distinguished as the scholar and the Christian—I do devise and bequeath the sum of thirty-seven thousand pounds sterling, now in the English funds,' &c., &c.; and then follows the manner in which he will have his charity vested and bestowed, and all about the prize which shall be for ever designated and termed 'The Vavasour Prize,' and what shall be the words of the Latin speech which shall be spoken when the said prize be delivered, and a great deal more to that effect; so, then, he passes to the other legacy, of exactly the same sum, to the hospital, usually called and styled ——, in the city of London, and says, 'And whereas we are assured by the holy Scriptures, which, in these days of blasphemy and sedition, it becomes every true Briton and member of the Established Church to support, that "charity doth cover a multitude of sins"—so I do give and devise,'

&c., &c., 'to be for ever termed in the deeds,' &c., &c., 'of the said hospital, "The Vavasour Charity;" and always provided that on the anniversary of the day of my death, a sermon shall be preached in the chapel attached to the said hospital by a clergyman of the Established Church, on any text appropriate to the day and deed so commemorated.' —But the conclusion is most beautiful, Mr. Bossolton:— 'And now having discharged my duties, to the best of my humble ability, to my God, my king, and my country, and dying in the full belief of the Protestant Church, as by law established, I do set my hand and seal,' &c., &c."

"A very pleasing, and charitable, and devout, and virtuous, testament or will, Mistress Merrylack," said Mr. Bossolton; "and in a time when anarchy with gigantic strides does devastate, and devour, and harm, the good old customs of our ancestors and forefathers, and tramples with its poisonous breath the Magna Charta, and the glorious revolution, it is beautiful—ay, and sweet—mark you, Mrs. Merrylack, to behold a gentleman of the aristocratic classes, or grades, supporting the institutions of his country with such remarkable energy of sentiments and with—and with—Mistress Merrylack—with sentiments of such remarkable energy."

"Pray," said the daughter, adjusting her ringlets by a little glass which hung over the tap, "how long has Mr. Mordaunt's lady been dead?"

"Oh! she died just before the squire came to the property," quoth the mother. "Poor thing—she was so pretty. I am sure I cried for a whole hour when I heard it. I think it was three years last month, when it happened. Old Mr. Vavasour died about two months afterwards."

"The afflicted husband" (said Mr. Bossolton, who was the victim of a most fiery Mrs. Boss at home), "went into foreign lands or parts, or, as it is vulgarly termed, the Continent, immediately after an event, or occurrence, so fatal to the cup of his prosperity, and the sunshine of his enjoyment, did he not, Mrs. Merrylack?"

"He did. And you know, Mr. Boss, he only returned about six months ago."

"And of what borough, or burgh, or town, or city, is he the member and representative?" asked Mr. Jeremiah Bossolton, putting another lump of sugar into his negus. "I have heard, it is true, but my memory is short; and, in the multitude and multifariousness of my professional engagements, I am often led into a forgetfulness of matters less important in their variety, and less—less various in their importance."

"Why," answered Mrs. Merrylack, "somehow or other, I quite forget too; but it is some distant borough. The gentleman wanted him to stand for the county, but he would not hear of it; perhaps he did not like the publicity of the thing, for he is mighty reserved."

"Proud, haughty, arrogant, and assumptious!" said Mr. Bossolton, with a puff of unusual length.

"Nay, nay," said the daughter (young people are always the first to defend,) "I'm sure he's not proud—he does a mort of good, and has the sweetest smile possible! I wonder if he'll marry again! He is very young yet, not above two or three and thirty." (The kind damsel would not have thought two or three and thirty *very* young some years ago; but we grow wonderfully indulgent to the age of other people as we grow older ourselves!)

"And what an eye he has!" said the landlady. "Well, for my part—but, bless me. Here, John—John—John—waiter—husband, I mean—here's a carriage and four at the door. Lizzy, dear, is my cap right?"

And mother, daughter, and husband, all flocked, charged with simper, courtesy, and bow, to receive their expected guests. With a disappointment which we who keep not inns can but very imperfectly conceive, the trio beheld a single personage—a valet—descend from the box, open the carriage door, and take out—a desk!—Of all things human, male or female, the said carriage was utterly empty.

The valet bustled up to the landlady: "My master's here, ma'am, I think—rode on before!"

"And who is your master?" asked Mrs. Merrylack—a thrill of alarm, and the thought of No. Four, coming across her at the same time.

"Who!" said the valet, rubbing his hands; "who!—why, Clarence Talbot Linden, Esq., of Scarsdale Park, county of York, late Secretary of Legation at the court of ——, now M.P., and one of his Majesty's Under Secretaries of State."

"Mercy upon us!" cried the astounded landlady, "and No. Four! only think of it. Run, John,—John—run—light a fire (the night's cold, I think)—in the Elephant, Number sixteen—beg the gentleman's pardon—say it was occupied till now; ask what he'll have for dinner—fish, flesh, fowl, steaks, joints, chops, tarts—or, if it's too late (but it's quite early yet—you may put back the day an hour or so), ask what he'll have for supper—run, John, run: —what's the oaf staying for?—run, I tell you!—Pray, sir, walk in (to the valet, our old friend Mr. Harrison)—you'll be hungry after your journey, I think; no ceremony, I beg."

"He's not so handsome as his master," said Miss Elizabeth, glancing at Harrison discontentedly—"but he does not look like a married man, somehow. I'll just step upstairs and change my cap; it would be but civil if the gentleman sups with us."

Meanwhile Clarence having been left alone in the quiet enjoyment of No. Four, had examined the little apartment with an interest not altogether unmingled with painful reflections. There are few persons, however fortunate, who can look back to eight years of their life, and not feel somewhat of disappointment in the retrospect: few persons, whose fortunes the world envy, to whom the token of past time, suddenly obtruded on their remembrance, does not awaken hopes destroyed, and wishes deceived, which that world has never known. We tell our triumphs to the

crowd, but our own hearts are the sole confidants of our sorrows. "Twice," said Clarence to himself, "twice before I have been in this humble room; the first was when, at the age of eighteen, I was just launched into the world—a vessel which had for its only hope the motto of the chivalrous Sidney,—

'Aut viam inveniam, aut faciam;'[1]

yet, humble and nameless as I was, how well I can recall the exaggerated ambition, nay the *certainty* of success, as well as its *desire*, which then burnt within me. I smile now at the overweening vanity of those hopes—some, indeed, realised, but how many nipped and withered for ever, seeds, of which a few fell upon rich ground, and prospered, but of which how far the greater number were scattered, some upon the wayside, and were devoured by immediate cares, some on stony places, and when the sun of manhood was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root withered away: and some among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. I am now rich, honoured, high in the favour of courts, and not altogether unknown or unesteemed *arbitrio popularis auræ*: and yet I almost think I was happier when, in that flush of youth and inexperience, I looked forth into the wide world, and imagined that from every corner would spring up a triumph for my vanity, or an object for my affections. The next time I stood in this little spot, I was no longer the dependant of a precarious charity, or the idle adventurer who had no stepping-stone but his ambition. I was then just declared the heir of wealth, which I could not rationally have hoped for five years before, and which was in itself sufficient to satisfy the aspirings of ordinary men. But I was corroded with anxieties for the object of my love, and regret for the friend whom I had lost: perhaps the eagerness of my heart for the one rendered me, for the moment, too little mindful of the other; but, in after

[1] I will either find my way, or—make it.

years, memory took ample atonement for that temporary suspension of her duties. How often have I recalled, in this world of cold ties and false hearts, that true and generous friend, from whose lessons my mind took improvement, and from whose warnings, example; who was to me, living, a father, and from whose generosity whatever worldly advantages I have enjoyed, or distinctions I have gained, are derived! *Then* I was going with a torn, yet credulous, heart, to pour forth my secret and my passion to *her*, and, within one little week thence, how shipwrecked of all hope, object, and future happiness, I was! Perhaps, at that time, I did not sufficiently consider the excusable cautions of the world—I should not have taken such umbrage at her father's letter—I should have revealed to him my birth, and accession of fortune—nor bartered the truth of certain happiness for the trials and manœuvres of romance. But it is too late to repent now. By this time my image must be wholly obliterated from her heart: she has seen me in the crowd, and passed me coldly by: her cheek is pale, but not for me; and in a little—little while—she will be another's, and lost to me for ever! Yet have I never forgotten her through change or time—the hard and harsh projects of ambition—the labours of business, or the engrossing schemes of political intrigue. Never! —but this is a vain and foolish subject of reflection now."

And not the *less* reflecting upon it for that sage and veracious recollection, Clarence turned from the window, against which he had been leaning, and drawing one of the four chairs to the solitary table, he sat down, moody and disconsolate, and leaning his face upon his hands, pursued the confused, yet not disconnected, thread of his meditations.

The door abruptly opened, and Mr. Merrylack appeared.

"Dear me, sir!" cried he, "a thousand pities you should have been put here, sir! Pray step up stairs, sir; the front drawing-room is just vacant, sir; what will you please to have for dinner, sir?" &c., &c., according to the instruc-

tions of his wife. To Mr. Merrylack's great dismay, Clarence, however, resolutely refused all attempts at locomotion, and contenting himself with intrusting the dinner to the discretion of the landlady, desired to be left alone till it was prepared.

Now, when Mr. John Merrylack returned to the taproom, and communicated the stubborn adherence to No. Four manifested by its occupier, our good hostess felt exceedingly discomposed. "You are *so* stupid, John," said she; "I'll go and expostulate like with him;" and she was rising for that purpose when Harrison, who was taking particularly good care of himself, drew her back; "I know my master's temper better than you do, ma'am," said he; "and when he is in the humour to be stubborn, the devil himself could not get him out of it. I dare say he wants to be left to himself: he is very fond of being alone now and then; state affairs, you know (added the valet, mysteriously touching his forehead), and even I dare not disturb him for the world; so make yourself easy, and I'll go to him when *he* has dined, and *I* supped. There is time enough for No. Four when we have taken care of number *one*. Miss, your health!"

The landlady, reluctantly overruled in her design, reseated herself.

"Mr. Clarence Linden, M.P., did you say, sir?" said the learned Jeremiah: "surely I have had that name or appellation in my books, but I cannot, at this instant of time, recall to my recollection the exact date and circumstance of my professional services to the gentleman so designated, styled or, I may say, termed."

"Can't say, I am sure, sir," said Harrison; "lived with my master many years—never had the pleasure of seeing you before, nor of travelling this road—a very hilly road it is, sir. Miss, this negus is as bright as your eyes and as warm as my admiration."

"Oh, sir!"

"Pray," said Mr. Merrylack, who, like most of his tribe,

was a bit of a politician; "is it the Mr. Linden who made that long speech in the House the other day?"

"Precisely, sir. He is a very eloquent gentleman, indeed: pity he speaks so little—never made but that one long speech since he has been in the House, and a capital one it was too. You saw how the prime minister complimented him upon it. 'A speech,' said his lordship, 'which had united the graces of youthful genius with the sound calculations of matured experience.'"

"Did the prime minister really so speak?" said Jeremiah: "what a beautiful, and noble, and sensible compliment! I will examine my books when I go home—'the graces of youthful genius with the sound calculations of matured experience!'"

"If he is in the Parliament House," quoth the landlady, "I suppose he will know our Mr. Mordaunt, when the squire takes his seat next—what do you call it—sessions?"

"Know Mr. Mordaunt!" said the valet. "It is to see him that *we* have come down here. We intended to have gone there to-night, but master thought it too late, and I saw he was in a melancholy humour; we therefore resolved to come here; and so master took one of the horses from the groom, whom we have left behind with the other, and came on alone. I take it, he must have been in this town before, for he described the inn so well.—Capital cheese this; as mild—as mild as your sweet smile, miss!"

"Oh, sir!"

"Pray, *Mistress* Merrylack," said Mr. Jeremiah Bossolton, depositing his pipe on the table, and awakening from a profound reverie in which for the last five minutes his senses had been buried,—"pray, Mistress Merrylack, do you not call to your mind, or your reminiscence, or your—your recollection, a young gentleman, equally comely in his aspect and blandiloquent (ehem!) in his address, who had the misfortune to have his arm severely contused and afflicted by a violent kick from Mr. Mordaunt's horse, even in the yard in which your stables are situated, and who re-

mained for two or three days in your house, or tavern, or hotel? I do remember that you were grievously perplexed because of his name, the initials of which only he gave, or intrusted, or communicated to you, until you did exam——"

"I remember," interrupted Miss Elizabeth, "I remember well—a very beautiful young gentleman, who had a letter directed to be left here, addressed to him by the letters C. L., and who was afterwards kicked, and who admired your cap, mother, and whose name *was* Clarence Linden. You remember it well enough, mother, surely?"

"I *think* I do, Lizzy," said the landlady, slowly; for her memory, not so much occupied as her daughter's by beautiful young gentlemen, struggled slowly amidst dim ideas of the various travellers and visitors with whom her house had been honoured, before she came, at last, to the reminiscence of Clarence Linden — I *think* I do — and Squire Mordaunt was very attentive to him—and he broke one of the panes of glass in No. Eight and gave me half a guinea to pay for it. I *do* remember perfectly, Lizzy. So that is the Mr. Linden now here?—only think!"

"I should not have known him, certainly," said Miss Elizabeth; "he is grown so much taller, and his hair looks quite dark now, and his face is much thinner than it was; but he's very handsome still—is he not, sir?" turning to the valet.

"Ah! ah! well enough," said Mr. Harrison, stretching out his right leg, and falling away a little to the left, in the manner adopted by the renowned Gil Blas, in his address to the fair Laura—"well enough; but he's a little too tall and thin, *I* think."

Mr. Harrison's faults in shape were certainly not those of being too tall and thin.

"Perhaps so!" said Miss Elizabeth, who scented the vanity by a kindred instinct, and had her own reasons for pampering it—"perhaps so!"

"But he is a great favourite with the ladies all the same;

however, he only loves one lady. Ah, but I must not say who, though I know. However, she is so handsome; such eyes, they would go through you like a skewer; but not like yours, yours, Miss, which I vow and protest are as bright as a service of plate."

"Oh, sir!"

And amidst these graceful compliments the time slipped away, till Clarence's dinner and his valet's supper being fairly over, Mr. Harrison presented himself to his master, a perfectly different being in attendance to what he was in companionship—flippancy, impertinence, forwardness, all merged in the steady, sober, serious demeanour which characterise the respectful and well-bred domestic.

Clarence's orders were soon given. They were limited to the appurtenances of writing; and as soon as Harrison reappeared with his master's writing-desk, he was dismissed for the night.

Very slowly did Clarence settle himself to his task, and attempt to escape the *ennui* of his solitude, or the restlessness of thought feeding upon itself, by inditing the following epistle:—

"TO THE DUKE OF HAVERFIELD.

"I was very unfortunate, my dear duke, to miss seeing you, when I called in Arlington Street the evening before last, for I had a great deal to say to you—something upon public and a little upon private affairs. I will reserve the latter, since I only am the person concerned, for a future opportunity. With respect to the former,

* * * * * * *
* * * * * * *

"And now, having finished the political part of my letter, let me congratulate you most sincerely upon your approaching marriage with Miss Trevanion. I do not know her myself; but I remember that she was the bosom friend of Lady Flora Ardenne, whom I have often heard speak of her in the highest and most affectionate terms, so that

I imagine her brother could not better atone to you for dishonestly carrying off the fair Julia some three years ago, than by giving you his sister in honourable and orthodox exchange—the gold armour for the brazen.

"As for my lot, though I ought not, at this moment, to dim yours by dwelling upon it, you know how long, how constantly, how ardently I have loved Lady Flora Ardenne—how, for her sake, I have refused opportunities of alliance which might have gratified to the utmost that worldiness of heart which so many who saw me only in the crowd have been pleased to impute to me. You know that neither pleasure, nor change, nor the insult I received from her parents, nor the sudden indifference which I so little deserved from herself, has been able to obliterate her image. You will therefore sympathise with me, when I inform you that there is no longer any doubt of her marriage with Borodaile (or rather Lord Ulswater, since his father's death), as soon as the sixth month of his mourning expires; to this period only two months remain.

"Heavens! when one thinks over the past, how incredulous one could become to the future: when I recall all the tokens of love I received from that woman, I cannot persuade myself that they are now all forgotten, or rather, all lavished upon another.

"But I do not blame her—may she be happier with him than she could have been with me! and that hope shall whisper peace to regrets which I have been foolish to indulge so long, and it is perhaps well for me that they are about to be rendered for ever unavailing.

"I am staying at an inn, without books, companions, or anything to beguile time and thought, but this pen, ink, and paper. You will see, therefore, a reason and an excuse for my scribbling on to you, till my two sheets are filled, and the hour of ten (one can't well go to bed earlier) arrives.

"You remember having often heard me speak of a very extraordinary man whom I met in Italy, and with whom I

became intimate. He returned to England some months ago; and on hearing it my desire of renewing our acquaintance was so great, that I wrote to invite myself to his house. He gave me what is termed a very obliging answer, and left the choice of time to myself. You see now, most noble Festus, the reason of my journey hitherwards.

"His house, a fine old mansion, is situated about five or six miles from this town: and as I arrived here late in the evening, and knew that his habits were reserved and peculiar, I thought it better to take 'mine ease in my inn' for this night, and defer my visit to Mordaunt Court till tomorrow morning. In truth, I was not averse to renewing an old acquaintance—not, as you in your malice would suspect, with my hostess, but with her house. Some years ago, when I was eighteen, I first made a slight acquaintance with Mordaunt at this very inn, and now, at twenty-six, I am glad to have one evening to myself on the same spot, and retrace here all that has since happened to me.

"Now do not be alarmed; I am not going to inflict upon you the unquiet retrospect with which I have just been vexing myself; no, I will rather speak to you of my acquaintance and host to be. I have said that I first met Mordaunt some years since at this inn—an accident, for which his horse was to blame, brought us acquainted—I spent a day at his house, and was much interested in his conversation; since then, we did not meet till about two years and a half ago, when we were in Italy together. During the intermediate interval Mordaunt had married—lost his property by a lawsuit, disappeared from the world (whither none knew) for some years; recovered the estate he had lost by the death of his kinsman's heir, and shortly afterwards by that of the kinsman himself, and had become a widower, with one only child, a beautiful little girl of about four years old. He lived in perfect seclusion, avoided all intercourse with society, and seemed so perfectly unconscious of having ever seen me before, whenever in our rides or walks we met, that I could not venture to

intrude myself on a reserve so rigid and unbroken as that which characterised his habits and life.

"The gloom and loneliness, however, in which Mordaunt's days were spent, were far from partaking of that selfishness so common, almost so *necessarily* common, to recluses. Wherever he had gone in his travels through Italy, he had left light and rejoicing behind him. In his residence at ——, while unknown to the great and gay, he was familiar with the outcast and the destitute. The prison, the hospital, the sordid cabins of want, the abodes (so frequently in Italy, that emporium of artists and poets) where genius struggled against poverty and its own improvidence—all these were the spots to which his visits were paid, and in which 'the very stones prated of his whereabout.' It was a strange and striking contrast to compare the sickly enthusiasm of those who flocked to Italy to lavish their sentiments on statues, and their wealth on the modern impositions palmed upon their taste as the masterpieces of ancient art—it was a noble contrast, I say, to compare that ludicrous and idle enthusiasm with the quiet and wholesome energy of mind and heart which led Mordaunt, not to pour forth worship and homage to the unconscious monuments of the dead, but to console, to relieve, and to sustain the woes, the wants, the feebleness of the living.

"Yet, while he was thus employed in reducing the miseries and enlarging the happiness of others, the most settled melancholy seemed to mark himself 'as her own.' Clad in the deepest mourning, a stern and unbroken gloom sat for ever upon his countenance. I have observed, that if in his walks or rides any one, especially of the better classes, appeared to approach, he would strike into a new path. He could not bear even the scrutiny of a glance or the fellowship of a moment: and his mien, high and haughty, seemed not only to repel others, but to contradict the meekness and charity which his own actions so invariably and unequivocally displayed. It must, indeed, have been a

powerful exertion of principle over feeling, which induced him voluntarily to seek the abodes and intercourse of the rude beings he blessed and relieved.

"We met at two or three places to which my weak and imperfect charity had led me, especially at the house of a sickly and distressed artist; for in former life I had intimately known one of that profession; and I have since attempted to transfer to his brethren that debt of kindness which an early death forbade me to discharge to himself. It was thus that I first became acquainted with Mordaunt's occupations and pursuits: for what ennobled his benevolence was the remarkable obscurity in which it was veiled. It was in disguise and in secret that his generosity flowed; and so studiously did he conceal his name, and hide even his features, during his brief visits to 'the house of mourning,' that only one like myself, a close and minute investigator of whatever has once become an object of interest, could have traced his hand in the various works of happiness it had aided or created.

"One day, among some old ruins, I met him with his young daughter. By great good fortune I preserved the latter, who had wandered away from her father, from a fall of loose stones, which would inevitably have crushed her. I was myself much hurt by my effort, having received upon my shoulder a fragment of the falling stones; and thus our old acquaintance was renewed, and gradually ripened into intimacy; not, I must own, without great patience and constant endeavour on my part; for his gloom and lonely habits rendered him utterly impracticable of access to any (as Lord Aspeden would say) but a diplomatist. I saw a great deal of him during the six months I remained in Italy, and—but you know already how warmly I admire his extraordinary powers and venerate his character—Lord Aspeden's recall to England separated us.

"A general election ensued. I was returned for ——. I entered eagerly into domestic politics—your friendship, Lord Aspeden's kindness, my own wealth and industry,

made my success almost unprecedentedly rapid. Engaged heart and hand in those minute yet engrossing labours for which the aspirant in parliamentary and state intrigue must unhappily forego the more enlarged though abstruser speculations of general philosophy, and of that morality which may be termed *universal* politics, I have necessarily been employed in very different pursuits from those to which Mordaunt's contemplations are devoted, yet have I often recalled his maxims, with admiration at their depth, and obtained applause for opinions which were only imperfectly filtered from the pure springs of his own.

"It is about six months since he has returned to England, and he has very lately obtained a seat in parliament—so that we may trust soon to see his talents displayed upon a more public and enlarged theatre then they hitherto have been; and, though I fear his politics will be opposed to ours, I anticipate his public *début* with that interest which genius, even when adverse to one's self, always inspires. Yet I confess that I am desirous to see and converse with him once more in the familiarity and kindness of private intercourse. The rage of party, the narrowness of sectarian zeal, soon exclude from our friendship all those who differ from our opinions; and it is like sailors holding commune for the last time with each other, before their several vessels are divided by the perilous and uncertain sea, to confer in peace and retirement for a little while with those who are about to be launched with us on that same unquiet ocean where any momentary caprice of the winds may disjoin us for ever, and where our very union is only a sympathy in toil and a fellowship in danger.

"Adieu, my dear duke! it is fortunate for me that our public opinions are so closely allied, and that I may so reasonably calculate in private on the happiness and honour of subscribing myself your affectionate friend,

"C. L."

Such was the letter to which we shall leave the explanation of much that has taken place within the last three

years of our tale, and which, in its tone, will serve to show the kindness and generosity of heart and feeling that mingled (rather increased than abated by the time which brought wisdom) with the hardy activity and resolute ambition that characterised the mind of our "Disowned." We now consign him to such repose as the best bedroom in the Golden Fleece can afford, and conclude the chapter.

CHAPTER LX.

Though the wilds of enchantment all vernal and bright,
  In the days of delusion by fancy combined
With the vanishing phantoms of love and delight,
Abandon my soul, like a dream of the night,
  And leave but a desert behind.

Be hush'd my dark spirit, for Wisdom condemns
  When the faint and the feeble deplore;
Be strong as the rock of the ocean that stems
  A thousand wild waves on the shore.—CAMPBELL.

"SHALL I order the carriage round, sir?" said Harrison; "it is past one."

"Yes—yet stay—the day is fine—I will ride—let the carriage come on in the evening—see that my horse is saddled—you looked to his mash last night?"

"I did, sir. He seems wonderfully fresh: would you please to have me stay here with the carriage, sir, till the groom comes on with the other horse?"

"Ay; do—I don't know yet how far strange servants may be welcome where I am going."

"Now, that's lucky!" said Harrison to himself, as he shut the door: "I shall have a good five hours' opportunity of making my court here. Miss Elizabeth is really a very pretty girl, and might not be a bad match. I don't see any brothers; who knows but she may succeed to the

inn—hem! A servant may be ambitious as well as his master, I suppose."

So meditating, Harrison sauntered to the stables—saw (for he was an admirable servant, and could, at a pinch, dress a horse as well as its master) that Clarence's beautiful steed received the utmost nicety of grooming which the hostler could bestow—led it himself to the door—held the stirrup for his master, with the mingled humility and grace of his profession, and then strutted away—"pride on his brow and glory in his eye"—to be the cynosure and oracle of the taproom.

Meanwhile, Linden rode slowly onwards. As he passed that turn of the town by which he had for the first time entered it, the recollection of the eccentric and would-be gipsy flashed upon him. "I wonder," thought he, "where that singular man is now—whether he still preserves his itinerant and woodland tastes—

'Si flumina sylvasque inglorius amet,'[1]

or whether, as his family increased in age or number, he has turned from his wanderings, and at length found out 'the peaceful hermitage'? How glowingly the whole scene of that night comes across me—the wild tents, their wilder habitants, the mingled bluntness, poetry, honest good-nature, and spirit of enterprise which constituted the chief's nature—the jovial meal and mirth round the wood fire, and beneath the quiet stars, and the eagerness and zest with which I then mingled in the merriment. Alas!—how ill the fastidiousness and refinement of after days repays us for the elastic, buoyant, ready zeal with which our first youth enters into whatever is joyous, without pausing to ask if its cause and nature be congenial to our habits or kindred to our tastes. After all, there really *was* something philosophical in the romance of the jovial gipsy, childish as it seemed; and I should like much to know if the philosophy has got the better of the romance, or the

[1] If, unknown to fame, he love the streams and the woods.

romance, growing into habit, become commonplace and lost both its philosophy and its enthusiasm. Well, after I leave Mordaunt, I will try and find out my old friend."

With this resolution Clarence's thoughts took a new channel, and he soon entered upon Mordaunt's domain. As he rode through the park where brake and tree were glowing in the yellow tints which Autumn, like Ambition, gilds ere it withers, he paused for a moment to recall the scene as he last beheld it. It was then Spring—Spring in its first and flushest glory—when not a blade of grass but sent a perfume to the air—the happy air,

> Making sweet music while the young leaves danced:

when every cluster of the brown fern, that now lay dull and motionless around him, and amidst which the melancholy deer stood afar off, gazing upon the intruder, was vocal with the blithe melodies of the infant year—the sharp, yet sweet, voices of birds—and (heard at intervals) the chirp of the merry grasshopper, or the hum of the awakened bee. He sighed, as he now looked around, and recalled the change, both of time and season; and with that fondness of heart which causes man to knit his own little life to the varieties of Time, the signs of Heaven, or the revolutions of Nature, he recognised something kindred in the change of scene to the change of thought and feeling which years had wrought in the beholder.

Awaking from his reverie, he hastened his horse's pace, and was soon within sight of the house. Vavasour, during the few years he had possessed the place, had conducted and carried through improvements and additions to the old mansion, upon a scale equally costly and judicious. The heavy and motley magnificence of the architecture in which the house had been built remained unaltered; but a wing on either side, though exactly corresponding in style to the intermediate building, gave, by the long colonnade which ran across the one, and the stately windows which adorned the other, an air not only of grander extent, but

more cheerful lightness to the massy and antiquated pile. It was, assuredly, in the point of view by which Clarence now approached it, a structure which possessed few superiors in point of size and effect; and harmonised so well with the noble extent of the park, the ancient woods, and the venerable avenues, that a very slight effort of imagination might have poured from the massive portals the pageantries of old days, and the gay galliard of chivalric romance with which the scene was in such accordance, and which in a former age it had so often witnessed.

Ah, little could any one who looked upon that gorgeous pile, and the broad lands which, beyond the boundaries of the park, swelled on the hills of the distant landscape, studded at frequent intervals with the spires and villages, which adorned the wide baronies of Mordaunt—little could he who thus gazed around have imagined that the owner of all he surveyed had passed the glory and verdure of his manhood in the bitterest struggles with gnawing want, and rebellious pride, and urgent passion, without friend or aid but his own haughty and supporting virtue, sentenced to bear yet in his wasted and barren heart the sign of the storm he had resisted, and the scathed token of the lightning he had braved. None but Crauford, who had his own reasons for taciturnity, and the itinerant broker, easily bribed into silence, had ever known of the *extreme* poverty from which Mordaunt had passed to his rightful possessions. It was whispered, indeed, that he had been reduced to narrow and straitened circumstances; but the whisper had been only the breath of rumour, and the imagined poverty far short of the reality: for the pride of Mordaunt (the great, almost the sole failing in his character) could not endure that all he had borne and baffled should be bared to the vulgar eye; and, by a rare anomaly of mind, indifferent as he was to renown, he was morbidly susceptible of shame.

When Clarence rang at the ivy-covered porch, and made inquiry for Mordaunt, he was informed that the latter was

in the park, by the river, where most of his hours, during the daytime, were spent.

"Shall I send to acquaint him that you are come, sir?" said the servant.

"No," answered Clarence, "I will leave my horse to one of the grooms, and stroll down to the river in search of your master."

Suiting the action to the word, he dismounted, consigned his steed to the groom, and, following the direction indicated to him, bent his way to the "river."

As he descended the hill, the brook (for it did not deserve, though it received, a higher name) opened enchantingly upon his view. Amidst the fragrant reed and the wild flower, still sweet, though fading, and tufts of tedded grass, all of which, when crushed beneath the foot, sent a mingled tribute to its sparkling waves, the wild stream took its gladsome course, now contracted by gloomy firs, which, bending over the water, cast somewhat of their own sadness upon its surface—now glancing forth from the shade, as it "broke into dimples and laughed in the sun,"—now washing the gnarled and spreading roots of some lonely ash, which, hanging over it, still and droopingly, seemed, the hermit of the scene, to moralise on its noisy and various wanderings—now winding round the hill, and losing itself at last amidst thick copses, where day did never more than wink and glimmer, and where, at night, its waters, brawling through their stony channel, seemed like a spirit's wail, and harmonised well with the scream of the grey owl, wheeling from her dim retreat, or the moaning and rare sound of some solitary deer.

As Clarence's eye roved admiringly over the scene before him, it dwelt at last upon a small building situated on the wildest part of the opposite bank; it was entirely overgrown with ivy, and the outline only remained to show the gothic antiquity of the architecture. It was a single square tower, built none knew when or where, and, consequently, the spot of many vagrant guesses and wild legends

among the surrounding gossips. On approaching yet nearer he perceived, alone and seated on a little mound beside the tower, the object of his search.

Mordaunt was gazing with vacant yet earnest eye upon the waters beneath; and so intent was either his mood or look, that he was unaware of Clarence's approach. Tears fast and large were rolling from those haughty eyes, which men who shrank from their indifferent glance little deemed were capable of such weak and feminine emotion. Far, far through the aching void of time were the thoughts of the reft and solitary mourner; they were dwelling, in all the vivid and keen intensity of grief which dies not, upon the day when, about that hour and on that spot, he sat with Isabel's young cheek upon his bosom, and listened to a voice now only heard in dreams. He recalled the moment, when the fatal letter, charged with change and poverty, was given to him, and the pang which had rent his heart as he looked around upon a scene over which spring had just then breathed, and which he was about to leave to a fresh summer and a new lord; and then that deep, fond, half-fearful gaze with which Isabel had met his eye, and the feeling, proud even in its melancholy, with which he had drawn towards his breast all that earth had left to him, and thanked God in his heart of hearts that *she* was spared.

"And I am once more master" (thought he), "not only of all I then held, but of all which my wealthier forefathers possessed. But she who was the sharer of my sorrows and want—oh, where is she? Rather, ah! rather a hundredfold that her hand was still clasped in mine, and her spirit supporting me through poverty and trial, and her soft voice murmuring the comfort that steals away care, than to be thus heaped with wealth and honour, and *alone*—alone, where never more can come love, or hope, or the yearnings of affection, or the sweet fulness of a heart that seems fathomless in its tenderness, yet overflows! Had my lot, when she left me, been still the steepings of

bitterness, the stings of penury, the moody silence of hope, the damp and chill of sunless and aidless years, which rust the very iron of the soul away; had my lot been thus, as it had been, I could have borne her death, I could have looked upon her grave, and wept not—nay, I could have comforted my own struggles with the memory of her escape; but thus, at the very moment of prosperity, to leave the altered and promising earth, 'to house with darkness and with death;' no little gleam of sunshine, no brief recompense for the agonising past, no momentary respite between tears and the tomb. Oh, Heaven! what—what avail is a wealth which comes too late, when she, who could alone have made wealth bliss, is dust; and the light that should have gilded many and happy days, flings only a ghastly glare upon the tomb?"

Starting from these reflections, Mordaunt half unconsciously rose, and, dashing the tears from his eyes, was about to plunge into the neighbouring thicket, when looking up, he beheld Clarence, now within a few paces of him. He started, and seemed for one moment irresolute whether to meet or shun his advance, but probably deeming it too late for the latter, he banished, by one of those violent efforts with which men of proud and strong minds vanquish emotion, all outward sign of the past agony: and hastening towards his guest, greeted him with a welcome which, though from ordinary hosts it might have seemed cold, appeared to Clarence, who knew his temper, more cordial than he had ventured to anticipate.

CHAPTER LXI.

My father urged me sair,
  But my mither didna speak,
Though she looked into my face,
  Till my heart war like to break.—*Auld Robin Gray.*

"It is rather singular," said Lady Westborough to her daughter as they sat alone one afternoon in the music-room at Westborough Park, "it is rather singular that Lord Ulswater should not have come yet. He said he should certainly be here before three o'clock."

"You know, mamma, that he has some military duties to detain him at W——," answered Lady Flora, bending over a drawing in which she appeared to be earnestly engaged.

"True, my dear, and it was very kind in Lord —— to quarter the troop he commands in his native county; and very fortunate that W——, being his head-quarters, should also be so near us. But I cannot conceive that any duty can be sufficiently strong to detain him from you," added Lady Westborough, who had been accustomed all her life to a devotion unparalleled in this age. "You seem very indulgent, Flora."

"Alas!—she should rather say very indifferent," thought Lady Flora; but she did not give her thought utterance—she only looked up at her mother for a moment, and smiled faintly.

Whether there was something in that smile, or in the pale cheek of her daughter, that touched her, we know not, but Lady Westborough *was* touched; she threw her arms round Lady Flora's neck, kissed her fondly, and said, "You do not seem well to-day, my love—are you?"

"Oh—very—very well," answered Lady Flora, returning her mother's caress, and hiding her eyes, to which the tears had started.

"My child," said Lady Westborough, "you know that

both myself and your father are very desirous to see you married to Lord Ulswater—of high and ancient birth, of great wealth, young, unexceptionable in person and character, and warmly attached to you—it would be impossible even for the sanguine heart of a parent to ask for you a more eligible match. But if the thought really does make you wretched—and yet,—how can it?"

"I have consented," said Flora, gently; "all I ask is, do not speak to me more of the—the event than you can avoid."

Lady Westborough pressed her hand, sighed, and replied not.

The door opened, and the marquis, who had within the last year become a cripple, with the great man's malady, *dira podagra*, was wheeled in on his easy-chair: close behind him followed Lord Ulswater.

"I have brought you," said the marquis, who piqued himself on a vein of dry humour, "I have brought you, young lady, a consolation for my ill humours. Few gouty old fathers make themselves as welcome as I do—eh, Ulswater?"

"Dare I apply to myself Lord Westborough's compliment?" said the young nobleman, advancing towards Lady Flora; and drawing his seat near her, he entered into that whispered conversation so significant of courtship. But there was little in Lady Flora's manner by which an experienced eye would have detected the bride elect: no sudden blush, no downcast, yet sidelong look, no trembling of the hand, no indistinct confusion of the voice, struggling with unanalysed emotions. No—all was calm, cold, listless; her cheek changed not tint nor hue, and her words, clear and collected, seemed to contradict whatever the low murmurs of her betrothed might well be supposed to insinuate. But, even in *his* behaviour, there was something which, had Lady Westborough been less contented than she was with the externals and surface of manner, would have alarmed her for her daughter. A cloud, sullen and gloomy,

sate upon his brow, and his lip, alternately, quivered with something like scorn, or was compressed with a kind of stifled passion. Even in the exultation that sparkled in his eye, when he alluded to their approaching marriage, there was an expression that almost might have been termed fierce, and certainly was as little like the true orthodox ardour of "gentle swain," as Lady Flora's sad and half unconscious coldness resembled the diffident passion of the "blushing maiden."

"You have considerably passed the time in which we expected you, my lord," said Lady Westborough, who, as a beauty herself, was a little jealous of the deference due to the beauty of her daughter.

"It is true," said Lord Ulswater, glancing towards the opposite glass, and smoothing his right eyebrow with his forefinger—"it is true, but I could not help it. I had a great deal of business to do with my troop—I have put them into a new manœuvre. Do you know, my lord (turning to the marquis), I think it very likely the soldiers may have some work on the —— of this month?"

"Where, and wherefore?" asked Lord Westborough, whom a sudden twinge forced into the laconic.

"At W——. Some idle fellows hold a meeting there on that day; and if I may judge by bills and advertisements, chalkings on the walls, and, more than all, popular rumour, I have no doubt but what riot and sedition are intended—the magistrates are terribly frightened. I hope we shall have some cutting and hewing—I have no patience with the rebellious dogs."

"For shame—for shame!" cried Lady Westborough, who, though a worldly, was by no means an unfeeling, woman; "the poor people are misguided—they mean no harm."

Lord Ulswater smiled scornfully. "I never dispute upon politics, but at the head of my men," said he, and turned the conversation.

Shortly afterwards Lady Flora, complaining of indisposition, rose, left the apartment, and retired to her own

room. There she sat motionless and white as death for more than an hour. A day or two afterwards Miss Trevanion received the following letter from her:—

"Most heartily, most truly do I congratulate you, my dearest Eleanor, upon your approaching marriage. You may reasonably hope for all that happiness can afford; and though you do affect (for I do not think that you *feel*) a fear lest you should not be able to fix a character, volatile and light, like your lover's; yet, when I recollect his warmth of heart, and high sense, and your beauty, gentleness, charms of conversation, and purely disinterested love for one whose great worldly advantages might so easily bias or adulterate affection, I own that I have no dread for your future fate; no feeling that can at all darken the brightness of anticipation. Thank you, dearest, for the delicate kindness with which you allude to *my* destiny—me indeed you cannot congratulate as I can you. But do not grieve for me, my generous Eleanor: if not happy, I shall, I trust, be at least contented. My poor father implored me with tears in his eyes—my mother pressed my hand, but spoke not; and I—whose affections were withered, and hopes strewn, should I not have been hard-hearted indeed if they had not wrung from me a consent? And, oh! should I not be utterly lost, if in that consent which blessed them, I did not find something of peace and consolation?

"Yes, dearest, in two months, only two months, I shall be Lord Ulswater's wife; and when we meet, you shall look narrowly at me, and see if he or you have any right to complain of me.

"Have you seen Mr. Linden lately? Yet, do not answer the question; I ought not to cherish still that fatal clinging interest for one who has so utterly forgotten me. But I do rejoice in his prosperity; and when I hear his praises, and watch his career, I feel proud that I should once have loved him! Oh, how could he be so false, so cruel, in the very midst of his professions of undying, unswerving faith

to me, at the very moment when I was ill, miserable, wasting my very heart, for anxiety on his account—and such a woman too! And had he loved me, even though his letter was returned, would not his conscience have told him he deserved it, and would he not have sought me out in person, and endeavoured to win from my folly his forgiveness? But without attempting to see me, or speak to me, or soothe a displeasure so natural, to leave the country in silence, almost in disdain; and when we met again, to greet me with coldness and *hauteur*, and never betray, by word, sign, or look, that he had ever been to me more than the merest stranger! Fool! fool! that I am, to waste another thought upon him; but I will not, and ought not to do so. In two months I shall not even have the privilege of remembrance.

"I wish, Eleanor—for I assure you that I have tried and tried—that I could find anything to like and esteem (since love is out of the question) in this man, who seems so great, and, to me, so unaccountable a favourite with my parents. His countenance and voice are so harsh and stern; his manner at once so self-complacent and gloomy; his very sentiments so narrow, even in their notions of honour; his very courage so savage, and his pride so constant and offensive, that I in vain endeavour to persuade myself of his virtues, and recur, at least, to the unwearying affection for me which he professes. It is true that he has been three times refused; that I have told him I cannot love him; that I have even owned former love to another; he still continues his suit, and by dint of long hope has at length succeeded. But at times I could almost think that he married me from very hate, rather than love, there is such an artificial smoothness in his stern voice, such a latent meaning in his eye; and when he thinks I have not noticed him, I have, on suddenly turning towards him, perceived so dark and lowering an expression upon his countenance, that my heart has died within me for very fear.

"Had my mother been the least less kind, my father the least less urgent, I think, nay, I know, I could have gained such a victory over myself as I have done in consenting to the day. But enough of this. I did not think I should have run on so long and so foolishly; but we, dearest, have been children, and girls, and women together: we have loved each other with such fondness and unreserve that opening my heart to you seems only another phrase for thinking aloud.

"However, in two months I shall have no right even to thoughts—perhaps I may not even love you—till then, dearest Eleanor, I am, as ever, your affectionate and faithful friend, F. A."

Had Lord Westborough, indeed, been "less urgent," or her mother "less kind," nothing could ever have wrung from Lady Flora her consent to a marriage so ungenial and ill-omened.

Thrice had Lord Ulswater (then Lord Borodaile) been refused, before finally accepted; and those who judge only from the ordinary effects of pride, would be astonished that he should have still persevered. But his pride was that deep-rooted feeling which, so far from being repelled by a single blow, fights stubbornly and doggedly onward, till the battle is over and its object gained. From the moment he had resolved to address Lady Flora Ardenne, he had also resolved to win her. For three years, despite of a refusal, first gently, then more peremptorily, urged, he fixed himself in her train. He gave out that he was her affianced. In all parties, in all places, he forced himself near her, unheeding alike of her frowns or indifference; and his rank, his *hauteur*, his fierceness of mien, and acknowledged courage kept aloof of all the less arrogant and hardy pretenders to Lady Flora's favour. For this, indeed, she rather thanked than blamed him; and it was the only thing which in the least reconciled her modesty to his advances, or her pride to his presumption.

He had been prudent as well as bold. The father he had served and the mother he had won. Lord Westborough, addicted a little to politics, a good deal to show, and devotedly to gaming, was often greatly and seriously embarrassed. Lord Ulswater, even during the life of his father (who was lavishly generous to him), was provided with the means of relieving his intended father-in-law's necessities; and caring little for money in comparison to a desired object, he was willing enough, we do not say to *bribe*, but to *influence*, Lord Westborough's consent. These matters of arrangement were by no means concealed from the marchioness, who, herself ostentatious and profuse, was in no small degree benefited by them and though they did not solely procure, yet they certainly contributed to conciliate, her favour.

Few people are designedly and systematically wicked: even the worst find good motives for bad deeds; and are as intent upon discovering glosses for conduct, to deceive themselves, as to delude others. What wonder then, that poor Lady Westborough, never too rigidly addicted to self-examination, and viewing all things through a very worldly medium, saw only, in the alternate art and urgency employed against her daughter's real happiness, the various praiseworthy motives of permanently disentangling Lady Flora from an unworthy attachment, of procuring for her an establishment proportioned to her rank, and a husband whose attachment, already shown by such singular perseverance, was so likely to afford her everything which, in Lady Westborough's eyes, constituted felicity?

All our friends, perhaps, desire our happiness; but, then, it must invariably be in their own way. What a pity that they do not employ the same zeal in making us happy *in ours!*

CHAPTER LXII.

If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. *Proverbs*, ch. ii. ver. 3, 4, 5.

While Clarence was thus misjudged by one whose affections and conduct he, in turn, naturally misinterpreted—while Lady Flora was alternately struggling against and submitting to the fate which Lady Westborough saw approach with gladness—the father with indifference and the bridegroom with a pride that partook less of rapture than revenge, our unfortunate lover was endeavouring to glean, from Mordaunt's conversation and example, somewhat of that philosophy so rare except in the theories of the civilised and the occasional practice of the barbarian, which, though it cannot give us a charm against misfortune, bestows, at least, upon us the energy to support it.

We have said already, that when the first impression produced by Mordaunt's apparent pride and coldness wore away, it required little penetration to discover the benevolence and warmth of his mind. But none ignorant of his original disposition, or the misfortunes of his life, could ever have pierced the depths of his self-sacrificing nature, or measured the height of his lofty and devoted virtue. Many men may, perhaps, be found, who will give up to duty a cherished wish, or even a darling vice; but few will ever renounce to it their rooted *tastes*, or the indulgence of those habits which have almost become, by long use, their happiness itself. Naturally melancholy and thoughtful, feeding the sensibilities of his heart upon fiction, and though addicted to the cultivation of reason rather than fancy, having perhaps more of the deeper and acuter char-

acteristics of the poet, than those calm and half callous properties of nature, supposed to belong to the metaphysician and the calculating moralist, Mordaunt was above all men fondly addicted to solitude, and inclined to contemplations less useful than profound. The untimely death of Isabel, whom he had loved with that love which is the vent of hoarded and passionate musings, long nourished upon romance, and lavishing the wealth of a soul that overflows with secreted tenderness, upon the *first* object that can bring reality to fiction—that event had not only darkened melancholy into gloom, but had made loneliness still more dear to his habits by all the ties of memory, and all the consecrations of regret. The companionless wanderings—the midnight closet—the thoughts which, as Hume said of his own, could not exist in the world, but were all busy with life in seclusion: these were rendered sweeter than ever to a mind for which the ordinary objects of the world were now utterly loveless; and the musings of solitude had become, as it were, a rightful homage and offering to the dead! We may form, then, some idea of the extent to which, in Mordaunt's character, principle predominated over inclination, and regard for others over the love of self, when we see him tearing his spirit from its beloved retreats and abstracted contemplations, and devoting it to duties from which its fastidious and refined characteristics were particularly calculated to revolt. When we have considered his attachment to the hermitage, we can appreciate the virtue which made him among the most active citizens in the great world; when we have considered the natural selfishness of grief, the pride of philosophy, the indolence of meditation, the eloquence of wealth, which says, "Rest, and toil not," and the temptation within, which says, "Obey the voice;"—when we have considered these, we can perhaps do justice to the man who, sometimes on foot, and in the coarsest attire, travelled from inn to inn, and from hut to hut; who made human misery the object of his search, and human hap-

piness of his desire; who, breaking aside an aversion to rude contact, almost feminine in its extreme, voluntarily sought the meanest companions, and subjected himself to the coarsest intrusions; for whom the wail of affliction, or the moan of hunger, was as a summons which allowed neither hesitation nor appeal; who seemed possessed of a ubiquity for the purposes of good almost resembling that attributed to the wanderer in the magnificent fable of Melmoth, for the temptations to evil; who, by a zeal and labour that brought to habit and inclination a thousand martyrdoms, made his life a very hour-glass, in which each sand was a good deed or a virtuous design.

Many plunge into public affairs, to which they have had a previous distaste, from the desire of losing the memory of a private affliction; but so far from wishing to heal the wounds of remembrance by the anodynes which society can afford, it was only in retirement that Mordaunt found the flowers from which balm could be distilled. Many are through vanity magnanimous, and benevolent from the selfishness of fame; but, so far from seeking applause where he bestowed favour, Mordaunt had sedulously shrouded himself in darkness and disguise. And by that increasing propensity to quiet, so often found among those addicted to lofty or abstruse contemplation, he had conquered the ambition of youth with the philosophy of a manhood that had forestalled the affections of age. Many, in short, have become great or good to the community by individual motives easily resolved into common and earthly elements of desire; but they who inquire diligently into human nature have not often the exalted happiness to record a character like Mordaunt's actuated purely by a systematic principle of love, which covered mankind, as heaven does earth, with an atmosphere of light extending to the remotest corners, and penetrating the darkest recesses.

It was one of those violent and gusty evenings, which give to an English autumn something rude, rather than

gentle, in its characteristics, that Mordaunt and Clarence sat together,

And sowed the hours with various seeds of talk.

The young Isabel, the only living relic of the departed one, sat by her father's side, upon the floor; and, though their discourse was far beyond the comprehension of her years, yet did she seem to listen with a quiet and absorbed attention. In truth, child as she was, she so loved, and almost worshipped, her father, that the very tones of his voice had in them a charm, which could always vibrate, as it were, to her heart, and hush her into silence; and that melancholy and deep, though somewhat low voice, when it swelled or trembled with *thought*—which in Mordaunt *was feeling*—made her sad, she knew not why; and when she heard it, she would creep to his side, and put her little hand on his, and look up to him with eyes, in whose tender and glistening blue the spirit of her mother seemed to float. She was serious and thoughtful, and loving, beyond the usual capacities of childhood; perhaps her solitary condition, and habits of constant intercourse with one so grave as Mordaunt, and who always, when not absent on his excursions of charity, loved her to be with him, had given to her mind a precocity of feeling, and tinctured the simplicity of infancy with what ought to have been the colours of after years. She was not inclined to the sports of her age—she loved, rather, and above all else, to sit by Mordaunt's side, and silently pore over some books, or feminine task, and to steal her eyes every now and then away from her employment, in order to watch his motions, or provide for whatever her vigilant kindness of heart imagined he desired. And often, when he saw her fairy and lithe form hovering about him and attending on his wants, or her beautiful countenance glow with pleasure, when she fancied she supplied them, he almost believed that Isabel yet lived, though in another form, and that a

love, so intense and holy as hers had been, might transmigrate, but could not perish.

The young Isabel had displayed a passion for music so early, that it almost seemed innate; and as, from the mild and wise education she received, her ardour had never been repelled on the one hand or overstrained on the other, so, though she had but just passed her seventh year, she had attained to a singular proficiency in the art—an art that suited well with her lovely face, and fond feelings, and innocent heart, and it was almost heavenly, in the literal acceptation of the word, to hear her sweet though childish voice swell along the still pure airs of summer, and her angelic countenance all rapt and brilliant with the enthusiasm which her own melodies created.

Never had she borne the bitter breath of unkindness, nor writhed beneath that customary injustice which punishes in others the sins of our own temper, and the varied fretfulness of caprice; and so she had none of the fears and meannesses, and *acted* untruths which so usually pollute and debase the innocence of childhood. But the promise of her ingenuous brow (over which the silken hair flowed, parted into two streams of gold), and of the fearless but tender eyes, and of the quiet smile which sat for ever upon the rosy mouth, like Joy watching Love, was kept in its fullest extent by the mind, from which all thoughts, pure, kind, and guileless flowed, like waters from a well, which a spirit has made holy for its own dwelling.

On this evening, we have said that she sat by her father's side, and listened, though she only in part drank in its sense, to his conversation with his guest.

The room was of great extent, and surrounded with books, over which, at close intervals, the busts of the departed Great and the immortal Wise looked down. There was the sublime beauty of Plato, the harsher and more earthly countenance of Tully, the only Roman (except Lucretius) who might have been a Greek. There the mute marble gave the broad front of Bacon (itself a world)—and

there the features of Locke showed how the mind wears away the links of flesh with the file of thought. And over other departments of those works which remind us that man is made little lower than the angels, the stern face of the Florentine who sung of hell, contrasted with the quiet grandeur enthroned on the fair brow of the English poet—"blind but bold,"—and there the glorious, but genial countenance of him who has found in all humanity a friend, conspicuous among sages and minstrels, claimed brotherhood with all.

The fire burned clear and high, casting a rich twilight (for there was no other light in the room) over that Gothic chamber, and shining cheerily upon the varying countenance of Clarence and the more contemplative features of his host. In the latter you might see that care and thought had been harsh, but not unhallowed companions. In the lines which crossed his expanse of brow, time seemed to have buried many hopes; but his mien and air, if loftier, were gentler than in younger days; and though they had gained somewhat in dignity, had lost greatly in reserve.

There was in the old chamber, with its fretted roof and ancient "garniture," the various books which surrounded it, walls that the learned built to survive themselves, and in the marble likenesses of those for whom thought had won eternity, joined to the hour, the breathing quiet, and the hearth-light, by whose solitary rays we love best in the eves of autumn to discourse on graver or subtler themes—there was in all this a spell which seemed particularly to invite and to harmonise with that tone of conversation, some portions of which we are now about to relate.

"How loudly," said Clarence, "that last gust swept by—you remember that beautiful couplet in Tibullus—

> 'Quam juvat immites ventos audire cubantem,
> Et dominam tenero detinuisse sinu.'"[1]

[1] Sweet on our couch to hear the winds above,
And cling with closer heart to her we love.

"Ay," answered Mordaunt, with a scarcely audible sigh, "that is the feeling of the lover at the '*immites ventos*,' but *we* sages of the lamp make our mistress Wisdom, and when the winds rage without, it is to *her* that we cling. See how, from the same object different conclusions are drawn! The most common externals of nature, the wind and the wave, the stars and the heavens, the very earth on which we tread, never excite in different bosoms the same ideas; and it is from our own hearts, and not from an outward source, that we draw the hues which colour the web of our existence."

"It is true," answered Clarence. "You remember that in two specks of the moon the enamoured maiden perceived two unfortunate lovers, while the ambitious curate conjectured that they were the spires of a cathedral? But it is not only to our *feelings*, but also to our *reasonings*, that we give the colours which they wear. The moral, for instance, which to one man seems atrocious, to another is divine. On the tendency of the same work what three people will agree? And how shall the most sanguine moralist hope to benefit mankind when he finds that, by the multitude, his wisest endeavours to instruct are often considered but as instruments to pervert?"

"I believe," answered Mordaunt, "that it is from our ignorance that our contentions flow; we debate with strife and with wrath, with bickering and with hatred, but of the thing debated *upon* we remain in the profoundest darkness. Like the labourers of Babel, while we endeavour in vain to express our meaning to each other, the fabric by which, for a common end, we would have ascended to heaven from the ills of earth remains for ever unadvanced and incomplete. Let us hope that knowledge is the universal language which shall re-unite us. As, in their sublime allegory, the Ancients signified that only through virtue we arrive at honour, so let us believe that only through knowledge can we arrive at virtue!"

"And yet," said Clarence, "that seems a melancholy

truth for the mass of the people, who have no time for the researches of wisdom."

"Not so much so as at first we might imagine," answered Mordaunt; "the few smooth all paths for the many. The precepts of knowledge it is difficult to extricate from error; but, once discovered, they gradually pass into maxims; and thus what the sage's life was consumed in acquiring becomes the acquisition of a moment to posterity. Knowledge is like the atmosphere—in order to dispel the vapour and dislodge the frost, our ancestors felled the forest, drained the marsh, and cultivated the waste, and we now breathe without an effort, in the purified air and the chastened climate, the result of the labour of generations and the progress of ages! As to-day, the common mechanic may equal in science, however inferior in genius, the friar[1] whom his contemporaries feared as a magician, so the opinions which now startle as well as astonish, may be received hereafter as acknowledged axioms, and pass into ordinary practice. We cannot even tell how far the sanguine[2] theories of certain philosophers deceive them when they anticipate, for future ages, a knowledge which shall bring perfection to the mind, baffle the diseases of the body and even protract to a date now utterly unknown the final destination of life; for Wisdom is a palace of which only the vestibule has been entered; nor can we guess what treasures are hid in those chambers, of which the experience of the past can afford us neither analogy nor clue."

"It was, then," said Clarence, who wished to draw his companion into speaking of himself, "it was then, from your addiction to studies not ordinarily made the subject of acquisition that you date (pardon me) your generosity, your

[1] Roger Bacon.

[2] See Condorcet *On the Progress of the Human Mind*, written some years after the supposed date of this conversation, but in which there is a slight, but eloquent and affecting, view of the philosophy to which Mordaunt refers.

devotedness, your feeling for others, and your indifference to self?"

"You flatter me," said Mordaunt, modestly, (and we may be permitted to crave attention to his reply, since it unfolds the secret springs of a character so singularly good and pure)—"you flatter me; but I will answer you, as if you had put the question without the compliment; nor, perhaps, will it be wholly uninstructive, as it will certainly be new, to sketch, without recurrence to events or what I may call exterior facts, a brief and progressive History of One Human Mind.

"Our first era of life is under the influence of the primitive feelings: we are pleased, and we laugh; hurt, and we weep: we vent our little passions the moment they are excited; and so much of novelty have we to *perceive*, that we have little leisure to *reflect*. By and by, fear teaches us to restrain our feelings: when displeased, we seek to revenge the displeasure, and are punished; we find the excess of our joy, our sorrow, our anger, alike considered criminal, and chidden into restraint. From harshness we become acquainted with deceit: the promise made is not fulfilled, the threat not executed, the fear falsely excited, and the hope wilfully disappointed: we are surrounded by systematised delusion, and we imbibe the contagion.

"From being forced into concealing thoughts which we do conceive, we begin to affect those which we do not: so early do we learn the main tasks of life, To Suppress and To Feign, that our memory will not carry us beyond that period of artifice to a state of nature when the twin principles of veracity and belief were so strong as to lead the philosophers of a modern school into the error of terming them innate.[1]

"It was with a mind restless and confused—feelings which were alternately chilled and counterfeited (the necessary results of my first tuition), that I was driven to mix with others of my age. They did not like me, nor do I

[1] Reid *On the Human Mind.*

blame them. *Les manières que l'on néglige comme de petites choses, sont souvent ce qui fait que les hommes décident de vous en bien ou en mal.*[1] Manner is acquired so imperceptibly that we have given its origin to nature, as we do the origin of all else for which our ignorance can find no other source. Mine was unprepossessing: I was disliked, and I returned the feeling; I sought not, and I was shunned. Then I thought that all were unjust to me, and I grew bitter, and sullen, and morose: I cased myself in the stubbornness of pride, I pored over the books which spoke of the worthlessness of man, and I indulged the discontent of myself by brooding over the frailities of my kind.

"My passions were strong, they told me to *suppress* them.—The precept was old, and seemed wise—I attempted to enforce it. I had already begun, in earlier infancy, the lesson: I had now only to renew it. Fortunately, I was diverted from this task, or my mind, in conquering its passions, would have conquered its powers. I learnt, in after lessons, that the passions are not to be suppressed—they are to be directed: and when directed, rather to be strengthened than subdued.

"Observe how a word may influence a life: a man whose opinion I esteemed made of me the casual and trite remark, that 'my nature was one of which it was impossible to augur evil or good—it might be extreme in either.' This observation roused me into thought: could I indeed be all that was good or evil? had I the choice, and could I hesitate which to choose? But what was good and what was evil? that seemed the most difficult inquiry.

"I asked and received no satisfactory reply;—in the words of Erasmus—*Totius negotii caput ac fontem ignorant, divinant, ac delirant omnes:*[2] so I resolved myself to inquire

[1] Those manners which one neglects as trifling are often the cause of the opinion, good or bad, formed of you by men.

[2] All ignore, guess, and rave about the head and fountain of the whole question at issue.

and to decide. I subjected to my scrutiny the moralist and the philosopher. I saw that on all sides they disputed, but I saw that they *grew virtuous in the dispute;* they uttered much that was absurd about the origin of good, but much more that was exalted in its praise; and I never rose from any work which treated ably upon morals, whatever were its peculiar opinions, but I felt my breast enlightened, and my mind ennobled by my studies. The professor of one sect commanded me to avoid the dogmatist of another as the propagator of moral poison; and the dogmatist retaliated on the professor; but I avoided neither: I read both, and turned all 'into honey and fine gold.' No inquiry into wisdom, however superficial, is undeserving attention. The vagaries of the idlest fancy will often chance, as it were, upon the most useful discoveries of truth, and serve as a guide to after and to slower disciples of wisdom; even as the peckings of birds in an unknown country indicate to the adventurous seaman the best and the safest fruits.

"From the *works* of men I looked into their *lives*, and I found that there was a vast difference (though I am not aware that it has before been remarked) between those who cultivated *a talent*, and those who culitvated *the mind;* I found that the mere men of genius were often erring or criminal in their lives; but that vice or crime in the disciples of philosophy was strikingly unfrequent and rare. The extremest culture of reason had not, it is true, been yet carried far enough to preserve the labourer from follies of opinion, but a moderate culture had been sufficient to deter him from the vices of life. And only to the sons of Wisdom, as of old to the sages of the East, seemed given the unerring star, which, through the travail of Earth, and the clouds of Heaven, led them at the last to their God!

"When I gleaned this fact from biography, I paused, and said—'Then must there be something excellent in Wisdom, if it can even in its most imperfect disciples, be

thus beneficial to morality.' Pursuing this sentiment, I redoubled my researches, and behold, the object of my quest was won! I had before sought a satisfactory answer to the question, 'What is Virtue?' from men of a thousand tenets, and my heart had rejected all I had received. 'Virtue,' said some, and my soul bowed reverently to the dictate, 'Virtue is Religion.' I heard and humbled myself before the Divine Book. Let me trust that I did not humble myself in vain! But the dictate satisfied less than it awed; for, either it limited Virtue to the mere belief, or, by extending it to the practice, of Religion, it extended also the inquiry to the method in which the practice should be applied. But with the first interpretation of the dictate, who could rest contented?—for, while, in the perfect enforcement of the tenets of our faith, all virtue may be found, so in the passive, and the mere belief in its divinity, we find only an engine as applicable to evil as to good:—the torch which should illumine the altar, has also lighted the stake, and the zeal of the persecutor has been no less sincere than the heroism of the martyr. Rejecting, therefore, this interpretation, I accepted the other: I felt in my heart, and I rejoiced as I felt it, that in the practice of Religion the body of all virtue could be found. But, in that conviction, had I at once an answer to my inquiries?—Could the mere desire of good be sufficient to attain it—and was the *attempt* at virtue synonymous with *success?* On the contrary, have not those most desirous of obeying the precepts of God often sinned the most against their spirit, and has not zeal been frequently the most ardent when crime was the most rife?[1] But what, if neither sincerity nor zeal was sufficient to constitute goodness—what if in the breasts of the best-

[1] There can be no doubt that they who exterminated the Albigenses, established the Inquisition, lighted the fires at Smithfield, were actuated, not by a desire to do evil, but (monstrous as it may seem) to do good;—not to counteract, but to enforce what they believed, the wishes of the Almighty; so that a good intention, with-

intentioned, crime had been fostered, the more dangerously, because the more disguised—what ensued?—That the religion which they professed, they believed, they adored, *they had also misunderstood;* and that the precepts to be drawn from the Holy Book, they had darkened by their ignorance or perverted by their passions! Here, then, at once, my enigma was solved: here, then, at once, I was led to the goal of my inquiry!—Ignorance and the perversion of passion, are but the same thing—though under different names; for only by our ignorance are our passions perverted. Therefore, what followed?—that, if by ignorance the greatest of God's gifts had been turned to evil, Knowledge alone was the light by which even the pages of Religion should be read. It followed, that the Providence that knew that the nature it had created should be constantly in exercise, and that only through labour comes improvement, had wisely ordained that we should toil even for the blessing of its holiest and clearest laws. It had given us in Religion, as in this magnificent world, treasures and harvests which might be called forth in incalculable abundance; but had decreed that through our exertions only *should* they be called forth;—a palace more gorgeous than the palaces of enchantment was before us, but its chambers were a labyrinth which required a clue.

"What was that clue? Was it to be sought for in the corners of earth, or was it not beneficially centred in ourselves? Was it not the exercise of a power easy for us to use, if we would dare to do so? Was it not the simple exertion of the discernment granted to us for all else? Was it not the exercise of our reason? 'Reason!' cried the Zealot, 'pernicious and hateful instrument, it is fraught

out the enlightenment to direct it to a fitting object, may be as pernicious to human happiness as one the most fiendish. We are told of a whole people who used to murder their guests, not from ferocity or interest, but from the pure and praiseworthy motive *of obtaining the good qualities*, which they believed, by the murder of the deceased, devolved upon them!

with peril to yourself and to others; do not think for a moment of employing an engine so fallacious and so dangerous.' But I listened not to the Zealot: could the steady and bright torch which, even where the Star of Bethlehem had withheld its diviner light, had guided some patient and unwearied steps to the very throne of Virtue, become but a deceitful meteor to him who kindled it *for the aid of Religion*, and in an eternal cause? Could it be perilous to task our reason, even to the utmost, in the investigation of the true utility and hidden wisdom of the works of God, when God himself had ordained that only through *some* exertion of our reason should we know either from Nature or Revelation that He himself existed? 'But,' cried the Zealot again, 'but mere mortal wisdom teaches men presumption, and presumption, doubt.' 'Pardon me,' I answered; 'it is not Wisdom, but Ignorance, which teaches men presumption; *Genius* may be sometimes arrogant, but nothing is so diffident as *Knowledge*.' 'But,' resumed the Zealot, 'those accustomed to subtle inquiries may dwell only on the minutiæ of faith—inexplicable, because useless to explain, and argue from those minutiæ against the grand and universal truth.' 'Pardon me again: it is the petty, not the enlarged, mind, which prefers casuistry to conviction; it is the confined and short sight of Ignorance which, unable to comprehend the great bearings of truth, pries only into its narrow and obscure corners, occupying itself in scrutinising the atoms of a part, while the eagle eye of Wisdom contemplates, in its widest scale, the luminous majesty of the whole. Survey our faults, our errors, our vices—fearful and fertile field! Trace them to their causes—all those causes resolve them into *one*—Ignorance! For, as we have already seen, that from this source flow the abuses of Religion, so also from this source flow the abuses of all other blessings—of talents, of riches, of power: for we abuse things, either because we know not their real use, or because, with an equal blindness, we imagine the abuse more adapted to our happiness. But as ignorance,

then, is the sole spring of evil—so, as the antidote to ignorance is knowledge, *it necessarily* follows that, were we *consummate* in knowledge, we should be perfect in good. He, therefore, who retards the progress of intellect, countenances crime—nay, to a state, is the greatest of criminals; while he who circulates that mental light more precious than the visual, is the holiest improver, and the surest benefactor of his race. Nor let us believe, with the dupes of a shallow policy, that there exists upon the earth *one* prejudice that can be called salutary, or *one* error beneficial to perpetrate. As the petty fish, which is fabled to possess the property of arresting the progress of the largest vessel to which it clings, even so may a single prejudice, unnoticed or despised, more than the adverse blast, or the dead calm, delay the barque of Knowledge in the vast seas of Time.

"It is true that the sanguineness of philanthropists may have carried them too far; it is true (for the experiment has not yet been made) that God *may* have denied to us, in this state, the consummation of knowledge, and the consequent perfection in good; but because we cannot be perfect, are we to resolve we will be evil? One step in knowledge is one step from sin: one step from sin is one step nearer to Heaven. Oh! never let us be deluded by those who, for *political* motives, would adulterate the divinity of *religious* truths: never let us believe that our Father in Heaven rewards most the one talent unemployed or that prejudice and indolence and folly find the most favour in His sight! The very heathen has bequeathed to us a nobler estimate of His nature; and the same sentence which so sublimely declares 'TRUTH IS THE BODY OF GOD,' declares also 'AND LIGHT IS HIS SHADOW.'[1]

"Persuaded, then, that knowledge contained the key to virtue, it was to knowledge that I applied. The first grand lesson which it taught me was the solution of a phrase most hackneyed, least understood, viz., '*common sense.*'[2] It

[1] Plato. [2] Κοινονοημοσύνη—Sensus communis.

is in the Portico of the Greek sage that that phrase has received its legitimate explanation; it is there we are taught that 'common sense' signifies 'the sense of the common interest.' Yes! it is the most beautiful truth in morals that we have no such thing as a distinct or divided interest from our race. In their welfare is ours; and, by choosing the broadest paths to effect their happiness, we choose the surest and the shortest to our own. As I read and pondered over these truths, I was sensible that a great change was working a fresh world out of the former materials of my mind. My passions, which before I had checked into uselessness, or exerted to destruction, now started forth in a nobler shape, and prepared for a new direction: instead of urging me to individual aggrandisement, they panted for universal good, and coveted the reward of Ambition only for the triumphs of Benevolence.

"This is one stage of virtue—I cannot resist the belief that there is a higher: it is when we begin to love virtue, not for its objects, but itself. For there are in knowledge these two excellences:—first, that it offers to every man, the most selfish and the most exalted, his peculiar inducement to good. It says to the former, 'Serve mankind, and you serve yourself;' to the latter, 'In choosing the best means to secure your own happiness, you will have the sublime inducement of promoting the happiness of mankind.'

"The second excellence of Knowledge is that even the selfish man, when he has once begun to love Virtue from little motives, loses the motives as he increases the love; and at last worships the deity, where before he only coveted the gold upon its altar.

"And thus I learned to love Virtue solely for its own beauty. I said with one who, among much dross, has many particles of ore, 'If it be not estimable in itself, I can see nothing estimable in following it for the sake of a bargain.'[1]

[1] Lord Shaftesbury.

"I looked round the world, and saw often Virtue in rags, and Vice in purple: the former conduces to happiness, it is true, but the happiness lies *within*, and not in externals. I contemned the deceitful folly with which writers have termed it poetical justice to make the good ultimately prosperous in wealth, honour, fortunate love, or successful desires. Nothing false, even in poetry, can be just; and that pretended moral is, of all, the falsest. Virtue is not more exempt than Vice from the ills of fate, but it contains within itself always an energy to resist them, and sometimes an anodyne to soothe—to repay your quotation from Tibullus:—

'Crura sonant ferro—sed canit inter opus!'[1]

"When in the depths of my soul I set up that divinity of this nether earth, which Brutus never really understood, if, because unsuccessful in its efforts, he doubted its existence, I said in the proud prayer with which I worshipped it, 'Poverty may humble my lot, but it shall not debase thee; Temptation may shake my nature, but not the rock on which thy temple is based; Misfortune may wither all the hopes that have blossomed around thine altar, but I will sacrifice dead leaves when the flowers are no more. Though all that I have loved perish—all that I have coveted fade away, I may murmur at fate, but I will have no voice but that of homage for thee! Nor, while thou smilest upon my way, would I exchange with the loftiest and happiest of thy foes! More bitter than aught of what I then dreamed have been my trials, *but I have fulfilled my vow!*

"I believe that alone to be a true description of Virtue which makes it all-sufficient to itself—that alone a just portraiture of its excellence which does not lessen its internal power by exaggerating its outward advantages, nor degrade its nobility by dwelling only on its rewards. The

[1] The chains clank on its limbs, but it sings amidst its tasks.

grandest moral of ancient lore has ever seemed to me that which the picture of Prometheus affords: in whom neither the shaking earth, nor the rending heaven, nor the rock without, nor the vulture within, could cause regret for past benevolence, or terror for future evil, or envy, even amidst tortures, for the dishonourable prosperity of his insulter! [1] Who that has glowed over this exalted picture will tell us that we must make Virtue prosperous in order to allure to it, or clothe Vice with misery in order to revolt us from its image? Oh! who, on the contrary, would not learn to adore Virtue, from the bitterest sufferings of such a votary, a hundredfold more than he would learn to love Vice from the gaudiest triumphs of its most fortunate disciples?"

Something there was in Mordaunt's voice and air, and the impassioned glow of his countenance, that, long after he had ceased, thrilled in Clarence's heart, "like the remembered tone of a mute lyre." And when a subsequent event led him at rash moments to doubt whether Virtue was indeed the chief good, Linden recalled the words of that night, and the enthusiasm with which they were uttered, repented that in his doubt he had wronged the truth, and felt that there *is* a power in the deep heart of man to which even Destiny is submitted!

CHAPTER LXIII.

Will you hear the letter?

* * * *

This is the motley-minded gentleman that I have before met in the forest.—*As You Like It.*

A MORNING or two after the conversation with which our last chapter concluded, Clarence received the following letter from the Duke of Haverfield:—

[1] Mercury.—See the *Prometheus* of Æschylus.

"Your letter, my dear Linden, would have been answered before, but for an occurrence which is generally supposed to engross the whole attention of the persons concerned in it. Let me see—ay, *three*—yes, I have been *exactly* three days married! Upon my honour, there is much less in the event than one would imagine; and the next time it happens I will not put myself to such amazing trouble and inconvenience about it. But one buys wisdom only by experience. Now, however, that I have communicated to you the fact, I expect you, in the first place, to excuse my negligence for not writing before; for (as I know you are fond of the *literæ humaniores*, I will give the sentiment the dignity of a quotation)—

'Un véritable amant ne connoit point d'amis;'[1]

and though I have been three days married, I am still a lover. In the second place, I expect you to be very grateful that, all things considered, I write to you *so soon;* it would indeed not be an ordinary inducement that could make me 'put pen to paper'—(Is not that the true vulgar, commercial, academical, metaphorical, epistolary style?)—so shortly after the fatal ceremony. So, had I nothing to say but in reply to your comments on state affairs—(hang them!)—or in applause of your Italian friend, of whom I say, as Charles II. said of the honest yeoman,—'I can admire virtue, though I can't imitate it!' I think it highly probable that your letter might still remain in a certain box of tortoise-shell and gold (formerly belonging to the great Richelieu, and now in my possession), in which I at this instant descry, 'with many a glance of woe and boding dire,' sundry epistles in manifold handwritings, all classed under the one fearful denomination—'unanswered.'

"No, my good Linden, my heart is inditing of a better matter than this. Listen to me, and then stay at your host's or order your swiftest steed, as seems most meet to you.

[1] "A true lover recognises no friends."—CORNEILLE.

"You said rightly that Miss Trevanion, now her Grace of Haverfield, was the intimate friend of Lady Flora Ardenne. I have often talked to her—viz., Eleanor, not Lady Flora—about you, and was renewing the conversation yesterday, when your letter, accidentally lying before me, reminded me of you.

"Sundry little secrets passed in due conjugal course from her possession into mine. I find that you have been believed, by Lady Flora, to have played the perfidious with La Meronville—that she never knew of your application to her father, and his reply—that, on the contrary, she accused you of indifference in going abroad without attempting to obtain an interview, or excuse your supposed infidelity—that her heart is utterly averse to a union with that odious Lord Boro—Bah—I mean Lord Ulswater; and that—prepare, Linden — she still cherishes your memory, even through time, change, and fancied desertion, with a tenderness which—which—deuce take it, I never could write sentiment—but you understand me; so I will not conclude the phrase. 'Nothing in oratory,' said my cousin D——, who was, *entre nous*, more honest than eloquent, 'like a break!'—'*down!* you should have added,' said I.

"I now, my dear Linden, leave you to your fate. For my part, though I own Lord Ulswater is a lord whom ladies in love with the *et ceteras* of married pomp might well desire, yet I do think it would be no difficult matter for you to eclipse him. I cannot, it is true, advise you to run away with Lady Flora. *Gentlemen* don't run away with the daughters of gentlemen; but, without running away, you may win your betrothed and Lord Ulswater's intended. A distinguished member of the House of Commons, owner of Scarsdale, and representative of the most ancient branch of the Talbots—*Mon Dieu!* you might marry a queen dowager, and decline settlements!

"And so, committing thee to the guidance of that winged god, who, if three days afford any experience, has

made thy friend forsake pleasure only to find happiness, I bid thee, most gentle Linden, farewell.

"HAVERFIELD."

Upon reading this letter, Clarence felt as a man suddenly transformed. From an exterior of calm and apathy, at the bottom of which lay one bitter and corroding recollection, he passed at once into a state of emotion, wild, agitated, and confused; yet, *amidst* all, was foremost a burning and intense hope, which for long years he had not permitted himself to form.

He descended into the breakfast parlour. Mordaunt, whose hours of *appearing*, though not of rising, were much later than Clarence's, was not yet down; and our lover had full leisure to form his plans, before his host made his *entrée*.

"Will you ride to-day?" said Mordaunt; "there are some old ruins in the neighbourhood well worth the trouble of a visit."

"I grieve to say," answered Clarence, "that I must take my leave of you. I have received intelligence this morning which may greatly influence my future life, and by which I am obliged to make an excursion to another part of the country, nearly a day's journey, on horseback."

Mordaunt looked at his guest, and conjectured by his heightened colour, and an embarrassment which he in vain endeavoured to conceal, that the journey might have some cause for its suddenness and despatch which the young senator had his peculiar reasons for concealing. Algernon contented himself, therefore, with expressing his regret at Linden's abrupt departure, without incurring the indiscreet hospitality of pressing a longer sojourn beneath his roof.

Immediately after breakfast, Clarence's horse was brought to the door, and Harrison received orders to wait with the carriage at W—— until his master returned. Not a little surprised, we trow, was the worthy valet at his master's sudden attachment to equestrian excursions.

Mordaunt accompanied his visitor through the park, and took leave of him with a warmth which sensibly touched Clarence, in spite of the absence and excitement of his thoughts; indeed, the unaffected and simple character of Linden, joined to his acute, bold, and cultivated mind, had taken strong hold of Mordaunt's interest and esteem.

It was a mild autumnal morning, but thick clouds in the rear prognosticated rain; and the stillness of the wind, the low flight of the swallows, and the lowing of the cattle, slowly gathering towards the nearest shelter within their appointed boundaries confirmed the inauspicious omen. Clarence had passed the town of W——, and was entering into a road singularly hilly, when, he "was aware," as the quaint old writers of former days expressed themselves, of a tall stranger, mounted on a neat well-trimmed galloway, who had for the last two minutes been advancing towards a closely parallel line with Clarence, and had, by sundry glances and hems, denoted a desire of commencing acquaintance and conversation with his fellow traveller.

At last he summoned courage, and said, with a respectful, though somewhat free, air, "That is a very fine horse of yours, sir—I have seldom seen so fast a walker; if all his other paces are equally good, he must be quite a treasure."

All men have their vanities. Clarence's was as much in his horse's excellence as his own; and, gratified even with the compliment of a stranger, he replied to it by joining in the praise, though with a modest and measured forbearance, which the stranger, if gifted with penetration, could easily have discerned was more affected than sincere.

"And yet, sir," resumed Clarence's new companion, "my little palfrey might perhaps keep pace with your steed; look—I lay the rein on his neck—and, you see, he rivals—by Heaven, he *outwalks* yours."

Not a little piqued and incensed, Linden also relaxed his rein, and urged his horse to a quicker step; but the lesser competitor not only sustained, but increased, his superior-

ity; and it was only by breaking into a trot that Linden's impatient and spirited steed could overtake him. Hitherto Clarence had not honoured his new companion with more than a rapid and slight glance; but rivalry, even in trifles, begets respect, and our defeated hero now examined him with a more curious eye.

The stranger was between forty and fifty—an age in which generally, very little of the boy has survived the advance of manhood; yet was there a hearty and frank exhilaration in the manner and look of the person we describe which is rarely found beyond the first stage of youth. His features were comely and clearly cut, and his air and appearance indicative of a man who might equally have belonged to the middle or the upper orders. But Clarence's memory, as well as attention, was employed in his survey of the stranger; and he recognised, in a countenance on which time has passed very lightly, an old and ofttimes recalled acquaintance. However, he did not immediately make himself known. "I will first see," thought he, "whether he can remember his young guest in the bronzed stranger, after eight years' absence."

"Well," said Clarence, as he approached the owner of the palfrey, who was laughing with childish glee at his conquest—"well, you have won, sir; but the tortoise might beat the hare in walking, and I content myself with thinking that at a trot or a gallop the result of a race would have been very different."

"I am not sure of that, sir," said the sturdy stranger, patting the arched neck of his little favourite: "if you would like to try either I should have no objection to venture a trifling wager on the event."

"You are very good," said Clarence, with a smile in which urbanity was a little mingled with contemptuous incredulity; "but I am not now at leisure to win your money: I have a long day's journey before me, and must not tire a faithful servant; yet I do candidly confess that I think" (and Clarence's recollection of the person he ad-

dressed made him introduce the quotation) "that my horse—

'Excels a common one
In shape, in courage, colour, *pace*, and bone.'"

"Eh, sir," cried our stranger, as his eyes sparkled at the verses: "I would own that your horse were worth all the horses in the kingdom, if you brought Will Shakspeare to prove it. And I am also willing to confess that your steed does fairly merit the splendid praise which follows the lines you have quoted—

'Round hoofed, short jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eyes, small head, and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide.'"

"Come," said Clarence, "your memory has atoned for your horse's victory, and I quite forgive your conquest, in return for your compliment; but suffer me to ask how long you have commenced cavalier. The Arab's *tent* is, if I err not, more a badge of your profession than the Arab's *steed*."

King Cole (for the stranger was no less a person) looked at his companion in surprise. "So you know me, then, sir! Well, it is a hard thing for a man to turn honest, when people have so much readier a recollection of his sins than his reform."

"Reform!" quoth Clarence, "am I then to understand that your majesty has abdicated your dominions under the greenwood tree?"

"You are," said Cole, eying his acquaintance inquisitively; "you are.

'*I* fear no more the heat of the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
I my worldly task have done,
Home am gone, and ta'en my wages.'"

"I congratulate you," said Clarence; "but only in part—for I have often envied your past state, and do not know

enough of your present to say whether I should equally envy *that*."

"Why," answered Cole, "after all, we commit a great error in imagining that it is the living wood or the dead wall which makes happiness. 'My mind to me a kingdom is—and it is that which you must envy, if you honour anything belonging to me with that feeling."

"The precept is both good and old," answered Clarence; "yet I think it was not a very favourite maxim of yours some years ago. I remember a time when you thought no happiness could exist out of 'dingle and bosky dell.' If not very intrusive on your secrets, may I know how long you have changed your sentiments and manner of life? The reason of the change I dare not presume to ask."

"Certainly," said the quondam gipsy, musingly—"certainly I have seen your face before, and even the tone of your voice strikes me as not wholly unfamiliar: yet I cannot for the life of me guess whom I have the honour of addressing. However, sir, I have no hesitation in answering your questions. It was just five years ago, last summer, when I left the Tents of Kedar. I now reside about a mile hence. It is but a hundred yards off the high road, and if you would not object to step aside and suffer a rasher, or aught else, to be 'the shoeing-horn to draw on a cup of ale.' as our plain forefathers were wont wittily to say, why, I shall be very happy to show you my habitation. You will have a double welcome, from the circumstance of *my* having been absent from home for the last three days."

Clarence, mindful of his journey, was about to decline the invitation, when a few heavy drops falling, began to fulfil the cloudy promise of the morning. "Trust," said Cole, "one who has been for years a watcher of the signs and menaces of the weather—we shall have a violent shower immediately. You have now no choice but to accompany me home."

"Well," said Clarence, yielding with a good grace, "I am glad of so good an excuse for intruding on your hospitality.

'O sky!
Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak?'"

"Bravo!" cried the ex-chief, too delighted to find a comrade so well acquainted with Shakspeare's sonnets, to heed the little injustice Clarence had done the sky, in accusing it of treachery its black clouds had by no means deserved. "Bravo, sir; and *now*, my palfrey against your steed—trot—eh—or gallop?"

"Trot, if it must be so," said Clarence, superciliously; "but I am a few paces before you."

"So much the better," cried the jovial chief. "Little John's mettle will be the more up—on with you, sir—he who breaks into a canter loses—on!"

And Clarence slightly touching his beautiful steed, the race was begun. At first his horse, which was a remarkable *stepper*, as the modern Messrs. Anderson and Dyson would say, greatly gained the advantage. "To the right," cried the *ci-devant* gipsy, as Linden had nearly passed a narrow lane which led to the domain of the ex-king. The turn gave "Little John" an opportunity which he seized to advantage; and, to Clarence's indignant surprise, he beheld Cole now close behind—now beside—and now—now—*before!* In the heat of the moment he put spurs rather too sharply to his horse, and the spirited animal immediately passed his competitor—*but*—in a canter!

"Victoria," cried Cole, keeping back his own steed—"Victoria—confess it!"

"Pshaw," said Clarence, petulantly.

"Nay, sir, never mind it," quoth the retired sovereign; "perhaps it was but a venial transgression of your horse—and on other ground I should not have beat you."

It is very easy to be generous when one is *quite* sure one is the victor. Clarence felt this, and, muttering out some-

thing about the sharp angle in the road, turned abruptly from all farther comment on the subject, by saying, "We are now, I suppose, entering your territory. Does not this white gate lead to your new (at least new to me) abode?"

"It does," replied Cole, opening the said gate, and pausing as if to suffer his guest and rival to look round and admire.

The house, in full view, was of red brick, small and square, faced with stone copings, and adorned in the centre with a gable roof, on which was a ball of glittering metal. A flight of stone steps led to the porch, which was of fair size and stately, considering the proportions of the mansion; over the door was a stone shield of arms, surmounted by a stag's head; and above this heraldic ornament was a window of great breadth, compared to the other conveniences of a similar nature. On either side of the house ran a slight iron fence, the protection of sundry plots of gay flowers and garden shrubs, while two peacocks were seen slowly stalking towards the inclosure to seek a shelter from the increasing shower. At the back of the building, thick trees and a rising hill gave a meet defence from the winds of winter; and in front, a sloping and small lawn afforded pasture for a few sheep and two pet deer. Towards the end of this lawn were two large fishponds, shaded by rows of feathered trees. On the margin of each of these, as if emblematic of ancient customs, was a common tent; and in the intermediate space was a rustic pleasure-house, fenced from the encroaching cattle, and half hid by surrounding laurel, and the parasite ivy.

All together there was a quiet and old-fashioned comfort, and even luxury, about the place, which suited well with the eccentric character of the abdicated chief; and Clarence, as he gazed around, really felt that he might, perhaps, deem the last state of the owner *not* worse than the first.

Unmindful of the rain, which now began to pour fast

and full, Cole suffered "Little John's" rein to fall over his neck, and the spoiled favourite to pluck the smooth grass beneath, while he pointed out to Clarence the various beauties of his seat.

"There, sir," said he, "by those ponds in which, I assure you, old Isaac might have fished with delight, I pass many a summer's day. I was always a lover of the angle, and the farthest pool is the most beautiful bathing-place imaginable; as glorious Geoffrey Chaucer says—

> 'The gravel's gold; the water pure as glass,
> The bankès round the well environing;
> And softe as velvet the younge grass
> That thereupon lustily come springing.'

"And in that arbour, Lucy—that is, my wife—sits in the summer evenings with her father and our children; and then—ah! see our pets come to welcome me"—pointing to the deer, who had advanced within a few yards of him, but, intimidated by the stranger, would not venture within reach—"Lucy loved choosing her favourites among animals which had formerly been wild, and, faith, I loved it too. But you observe the house, sir—it was built in the reign of Queen Anne: it belonged to my mother's family, but my father sold it, and his son five years ago rebought it. Those arms belonged to my maternal ancestry. Look—look at the peacocks creeping along—poor pride theirs that can't stand the shower! But, egad, that reminds me of the rain. Come sir, let us make for our shelter." And resuming their progress, a minute more brought them to the old-fashioned porch. Cole's ring summoned a man, not decked in "livery gay," but "clad in serving frock," who took the horses with a nod, half familiar, half respectful, at his master's injunctions of attention and hospitality to the stranger's beast; and then our old acquaintance, striking through a small low hall, ushered Clarence into the chief sitting-room of the mansion.

CHAPTER LXIV.

We are not poor; although we have
No roofs of cedar, nor our brave
Baiæ, nor keep
Account of such a flock of sheep,
Nor bullocks fed
To lard the shambles; barbles bred
To kiss our hands; nor do we wish
For Pollio's lampreys in our dish.

If we can meet and so confer
Both by a shining salt-cellar,
And have our roof,
Although not arch'd, yet weather-proof,
And ceiling free
From that cheap candle-bawdery;
We'll eat our bean with that full mirth
As we were lords of all the earth.

HERRICK, *from* HORACE.

ON entering the room, Clarence recognised Lucy, whom eight years had converted into a sleek and portly matron of about thirty-two, without stealing from her countenance its original expression of mingled modesty and good nature. She hastened to meet her husband, with an eager and joyous air of welcome seldom seen on matrimonial faces after so many years of wedlock.

A fine, stout boy, of about eleven years old, left a cross-bow, which on his father's entrance he had appeared earnestly employed in mending, to share with his mother the salutations of the Returned. An old man sat in an arm-chair by the fire, gazing on the three with an affectionate and gladdening eye, and playfully detaining a child of about four years old, who was struggling to escape to dear "papa!"

The room was of oak wainscot, and the furniture plain, solid, and strong, and cast in the fashion still frequently

found in those country houses which have remained unaltered by innovation since the days of George II.

Three rough-coated dogs, of a breed that would have puzzled a connoisseur, gave themselves the rousing shake, and, deserting the luxurious hearth, came in various welcome to their master.

One rubbed himself against Cole's sturdy legs, murmuring soft rejoicings: he was the grandsire of the canine race, and his wick of life burnt low in the socket. Another sprang up almost to the face of his master, and yelled his very heart out with joy: that was the son, exulting in the vigour of matured *doghood;*—and the third scrambled and tumbled over the others, uttering his pæans in a shrill treble, and chiding most snappishly at his two progenitors for interfering with his pretensions to notice: that was the infant dog, the little reveller in puppy childishness! Clarence stood by the door, with his fine countenance smiling benevolently at the happiness he beheld, and congratulating himself that for one moment the group had forgot that he was a stranger.

As soon as our gipsy friend had kissed his wife, shaken hands with his eldest hope, shaken his head at his youngest, smiled his salutation at the father-in-law, and patted into silence the canine claimants of his favour, he turned to Clarence, and saying, half bashfully, half good humouredly, "See what a troublesome thing it is to return home, even after three days' absence. Lucy, dearest, welcome a new friend!" he placed a chair by the fireside for his guest, and motioned him to be seated.

The chief expression of Clarence's open and bold countenance was centred in the eyes and forehead; and, as he now doffed his hat, which had hitherto concealed that expression, Lucy and her husband recognized him simultaneously.

"I am sure, sir," cried the former, "that I am glad to see you once more!"

"Ah! my young guest under the gipsy awning!" ex-

claimed the latter, shaking him heartily by the hand; "where were my eyes that they did not recognise you before?"

"Eight years," answered Clarence, "have worked more change with me and my friend here" (pointing to the boy, whom he had left last so mere a child), "than they have with you and his blooming mother. The wonder is, not that you did not remember me before, but that you remember me now!"

"You *are* altered, sir, certainly," said the frank chief. "Your face is thinner, and far graver, and the smooth cheeks of the boy (for, craving your pardon, you were little more then) are somewhat darkened by the bronzed complexion with which time honours the man."

And the good Cole sighed, as he contrasted Linden's ardent countenance and elastic figure, when he had last beheld him, with the serious and thoughtful face of the person now before him; yet did he inly own that years, if they had in some things deteriorated from, had in others improved the effect of Clarence's appearance; they had brought decision to his mien, and command to his brow, and had enlarged, to an ampler measure of dignity and power, the proportions of his form. Something too there was in his look, like that of a man who has stemmed fate, and won success; and the omen of future triumph, which our fortune-telling chief had drawn from his features, when first beheld, seemed already, in no small degree, to have been fulfilled.

Having seen her guest stationed in the seat of honour opposite her father, Lucy withdrew for a few moments, and when she reappeared, was followed by a neat-handed sort of Phillis for a country-maiden, bearing such kind of "savoury messes" as the house might be supposed to afford.

"At all events, mine host," said Clarence, "you did not desert the flesh-pots of Egypt when you forsook its tents."

"Nay," quoth the worthy Cole, seating himself at the table, "either under the roof or the awning, we may say, in the words of the old epilogue,[1]

> 'We can but bring you meat and set you stools,
> And to our best cheer say, You all are welcome.'

We are plain people still: but if you can stay till dinner, you shall have a bottle of such wine as our fathers' honest souls would have rejoiced in."

"I am truly sorry that I cannot tarry with you, after so fair a promise," replied Clarence; "but before night I must be many miles hence."

Lucy came forward timidly. "Do you remember this ring, sir?" said she (presenting one); "you dropt it in my boy's frock when we saw you last."

"I did so," answered Clarence. "I trust that he will not now disdain a stranger's offering. May it be as ominous of good luck to him as my night in your caravan has proved to me!"

"I am heartily glad to hear that you have prospered," said Cole—"now, let us fall to."

CHAPTER LXV.

> Out of these convertites
> There is much matter to be heard and learned.—SHAKSPEARE.

"IF you are bent upon leaving us so soon," said the honest Cole, as Clarence, refusing all farther solicitation to stay, seized the opportunity which the cessation of the rain afforded him, and rose to depart:—"if you are bent upon leaving us so soon, I will accompany you back again into the main road, as in duty bound."

"What, immediately on your return?" said Clarence.

[1] To the play of *All Fools*, by Chapman.

"No, no—not a step. What would my fair hostess say to me if I suffered it?"

"Rather, what would she say to me if I neglected such a courtesy? Why, sir, when I meet one who knows Shakspeare's sonnets, to say nothing of the lights of the lesser stars, as well as you, only once in eight years, do you not think I would make the most of him? Besides, it is but a quarter of a mile to the road, and I love walking after a shower."

"I am afraid, Mrs. Cole," said Clarence, "that I must be selfish enough to accept the offer." And Mrs. Cole, blushing and smiling her assent and adieu, Clarence shook hands with the whole party, grandfather and child included, and took his departure.

As Cole was now a pedestrian, Linden threw the rein over his arm, and walked on foot by his host's side.

"So," said he, smiling, "I must not inquire into the reasons of your retirement?"

"On the contrary," replied Cole; "I have walked with you the more gladly from my desire of telling them to you; for we all love to seem consistent, even in our chimeras. About six years ago, I confess that I began to wax a little weary of my wandering life; my child, in growing up, required playmates; shall I own that I did not like him to find them among the children of my own comrades? The old scamps were good enough for me, but the young ones were a little too bad for my son. Between you and me only be it said, my juvenile hope was already a little corrupted. The dog Mim—you remember Mim, sir—secretly taught him to filch as well as if he had been a bantling of his own; and, faith, our smaller goods and chattels, especially of an edible nature, began to disappear, with a rapidity and secrecy that our itinerant palace could very ill sustain. Among us (*i.e.* gipsies) there is a law by which no member of the gang may steal from another; but my little heaven-instructed youth would by no means abide by that distinction; and so boldly designed and well executed

were his rogueries that my paternal anxiety saw nothing before him but Botany Bay on the one hand and Newgate courtyard on the other."

"A sad prospect for the heir apparent!" quoth Clarence.

"It was so!" answered Cole; "and it made me deliberate. Then, as one gets older one's romance oozes out a little in rheums and catarrhs. I began to perceive that, though I had been bred I had not been educated, as a gipsy; and, what was worse, Lucy, though she never complained, felt that the walls of our palace were not exempt from the damps of winter, nor our royal state from the Caliban curses of

> 'Cramps and
> Side stitches that do pen our breath up.'

She fell ill; and during her illness I had sundry bright visions of warm rooms and coal fires, a friend, with whom I could converse upon Chaucer, and a tutor for my son who would teach him other arts than those of picking pockets and pilfering larders. Nevertheless, I was a little ashamed of my own thoughts; and I do not know whether they would have been yet put into practice, but for a trifling circumstance which converted doubt and longing into certainty.

"Our crank cuffins had for some time looked upon me with suspicion and coldness: my superior privileges and comforts they had at first forgiven, on account of my birth and my generosity to them; but by degrees they lost respect for the one and gratitude for the other; and as I had in a great measure ceased from participating in their adventures, or, during Lucy's illness which lasted several months, joining in their festivities, they at length considered me as a drone in a hive, by no means compensating by my services as an ally for my admittance into their horde as a stranger. You will easily conceive, when this once became the state of their feelings towards me, with how ill a temper they brooked the lordship of my stately caravan,

and my assumption of superior command. Above all, the women, who were very much incensed at Lucy's constant seclusion from their orgies, fanned the increasing discontent; and, at last, I verily believe that no eyesore could have been more grievous to the Egyptians than my wooden habitation and the smoke of its single chimney.

"From ill-will, the rascals proceeded to ill acts: and one dark night, when we were encamped on the very same ground as that which we occupied when we received you, three of them, Mim at their head, attacked me in mine own habitation. I verily believe, if they had mastered me, they would have robbed and murdered us all; except perhaps my son, whom they thought I ill-used, by depriving him of Mim's instructive society. Howbeit, I was still stirring when they invaded me, and by the help of the poker, and a tolerably strong arm, I repelled the assailants; but that very night, I passed from the land of Egypt, and made with all possible expedition to the nearest town, which was as you may remember, W——.

"Here, the very next day, I learnt that the house I now inhabit was to be sold. It had (as I before said) belonged to my mother's family, and my father had sold it a little before his death. It was the home from which I had been stolen, and to which I had been returned: often in my starlit wanderings had I flown to it in thought; and now it seemed as if Providence itself, in offering to my age the asylum I had above all others coveted for it, was interested in my retirement from the empire of an ungrateful people, and my atonement in rest for my past sins in migration.

"Well, sir, in short, I became the purchaser of the place you have just seen, and I now think that, after all, there is more happiness in reality than romance: like the laverock, here will I build my nest—

> 'Here give my weary spirit rest,
> And raise my low-pitched thoughts above
> Earth, or what poor mortals love.'"

"And your son," said Clarence, "has he reformed?"

"Oh, yes," answered Cole. "For my part, I believe the mind is less evil than people say it is; its great characteristic is imitation, and it will imitate the good as well as the bad, if we will set the example. I thank Heaven, sir, that my boy now might go from Dan to Beersheba, and not filch a groat by the way."

"What do you intend him for?" said Clarence.

"Why, he loves adventure, and, faith, I can't break him of that, for I love it too; so I think I shall get him a commission in the army, in order to give him a fitting and legitimate sphere wherein to indulge his propensities."

"You could not do better," said Clarence. "But your fine sister, what says she of your amendment?"

"Oh! she wrote me a long letter of congratulation upon it; and every other summer she is graciously pleased to pay me a visit of three months long; at which time, I observe, that poor Lucy is unusually smart and uncomfortable. We sit in the best room, and turn out the dogs; my father-in-law smokes his pipe in the arbour, instead of the drawing-room; and I receive sundry hints, all in vain, on the propriety of dressing for dinner. In return for these attentions on our part, my sister invariably brings my boy a present of a pair of white gloves, and my wife a French ribbon of the newest pattern; in the evening instead of my reading Shakspeare, she tells us anecdotes of high life, and when she goes away, she gives us in return for our hospitality, a very general and very gingerly invitation to her house. Lucy sometimes talks to me about accepting it; but I turn a deaf ear to all such overtures, and so we continue much better friends than we should be if we saw more of each other."

"And how long has your father-in-law been with you?"

"Ever since we have been here. He gave up his farm, and cultivates mine for me; for I know nothing of those agricultural matters. I made his coming a little surprise,

in order to please Lucy: you should have witnessed their meeting."

"I think I have now learned all particulars," said Clarence; "it only remains for me to congratulate you; but are you, in truth, never tired of the monotony and sameness of domestic life?"

"Yes!—and then I do, as I have just done—saddle Little John, and go on an excursion of three or four days, or even weeks, just as the whim seizes me; for I never return till I am driven back by the yearning for home, and the feeling that after all one's wanderings there is no place like it. Whether in private life, or public, sir, in parting with a little of one's liberty one gets a great deal of comfort in exchange."

"I thank you truly for your frankness," said Clarence; "it has solved many doubts with respect to you that have often occurred to me. And now we are in the main road, and I must bid you farewell; we part, but our paths lead to the same object—you return to happiness, and I *seek* it."

May *you* find it, and *I* not lose it, sir," said the wanderer reclaimed; and shaking hands, the pair parted.

CHAPTER LXVI.

Quicquid agit Rufus, nihil est, nisi Nævia Rufo,
Si gaudet, si flet, si tacet, hanc loquitur;
Cœnat, propinat, poscit, negat, annuit, una est
Nævia; si non sit Nævia, mutus erit.
Scriberet hesterna patri cum luce salutem
Nævia lux, inquit, Nævia numen, ave.[1]—MART.

"THE last time," said Clarence to himself, "that I travelled this road, on exactly the same errand that I travel now, I do remember that I was honoured by the company of one in all respects the opposite to mine honest host; for, whereas in the latter there is a luxuriant and wild eccentricity, an open and blunt simplicity, and a shrewd sense, which looks not after pence, but peace; so, in the mind of the friend of the late Lady Waddilove there was a flat and hedged-in primness and narrowness of thought—an inclosure of bargains and profits of all species,—mustard-pots, rings, monkeys, chains, jars, and plum-coloured velvet inexpressibles, his ideas, with the true alchemy of trade, turned them all into gold; yet was he also as shrewd and acute as he with whose character he contrasts—equally with him seeking comfort and gladness, and an asylum for his old age. Strange that all tempers should have a common object and never a common road to it! But, since I have begun the contrast, let me hope that it may be extended in its omen unto me; let me hope, that as my encountering with the mercantile Brown brought me ill-luck in my enterprise, thereby signifying the crosses and vexations of those who labor in the cheateries and overreachings which

[1] "Whatever Rufus does is nothing, except Nævia be at his elbow. Be he joyful or sorrowful, be he even silent, he is still harping upon her. He eats, he drinks, he talks, he denies, he assents.—Nævia is his sole theme: no Nævia, and he's dumb. Yesterday at daybreak, he would fain write a letter of salutation to his father; 'Hail, Nævia, light of my eyes,' quoth he; 'hail, Nævia, my divine one.'"

constitute the vocation of the world; so my meeting with the philosophical Cole, who has, both in vagrancy and rest, found cause to boast of happiness, authorities from his studies to favour his inclination to each, and reason to despise what he, with Sir Kenelm Digby, would wisely call—

'The fading blossoms of the earth;'

so my meeting with him may prove a token of good speed to mine errand, and thereby denote prosperity to one who seeks not riches, nor honour, nor the conquest of knaves, nor the good word of fools, but happy love, and the bourne of its quiet home."

Thus, half meditating, half moralising, and drawing, like a true lover, an omen of fear or hope from occurrences in which plain reason could have perceived neither type nor token, Clarence continued, and concluded, his day's journey. He put up at the same little inn he had visited three years ago, and watched his opportunity of seeing Lady Flora alone. More fortunate in that respect than he had been before, such opportunity the very next day presented to him.

CHAPTER LXVII.

Duke.—Sir Valentine!
Thur.—Yonder is Silvia, and Silvia's mine.
Val.—Thurio, give back.—*The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

"I THINK, mamma," said Lady Flora to her mother, "that as the morning is so beautiful, I will go into the pavilion to finish my drawing."

"But Lord Ulswater will be here in an hour, or perhaps less—may I tell him where you are, and suffer him to join you?"

"If you will accompany him," answered Lady Flora, coldly, as she took up her *portefeuille*, and withdrew.

Now the pavilion was a small summer-house of stone, situated in the most retired part of the grounds belonging to Westborough Park. It was a favourite retreat with Lady Flora, even in the winter months, for warm carpeting, a sheltered site, and a fireplace, constructed more for comfort than economy, made it scarcely less adapted to that reason than to the more genial suns of summer.

The morning was so bright and mild that Lady Flora left open the door as she entered; she seated herself at the table, and, unmindful of her pretended employment, suffered the *portefeuille* to remain unopened. Leaning her cheek upon her hand, she gazed vacantly on the ground, and scarcely felt the tears which gathered slowly to her eyes, but falling not, remained within the fair lids, chill and motionless, as if the thought which drew them there was born of a sorrow less agitated than fixed and silent.

The shadow of a man darkened the threshold, and there paused.

Slowly did Flora raise her eyes, and the next moment Clarence Linden was by her side, and at her feet.

"Flora," said he, in a tone trembling with its own emotions—"Flora, have years indeed separated us for ever—or dare I hope that we have misconstrued each other's hearts, and that at this moment they yearn to be united, with more than the fondness and fidelity of old? Speak to me, Flora, one word."

But she had sunk on the chair overpowered, surprised, and almost insensible; and it was not for some moments that she could utter words rather wrung from, than dictated by, her thoughts.

"Cruel and insulting—for what have you come?—is it at such a time that you taunt me with the remembrance of my past folly, or your—your" (she paused for a moment, confused and hesitating, but presently recovering herself, rose, and added, in a calmer tone)—"Surely you have no excuse for this intrusion—you will suffer me to leave you."

"No," exclaimed Clarence, violently agitated—"no! Have you not wronged me, stung me, wounded me to the core by your injustice?—and will you not hear now how differently I have deserved from you?—On a bed of fever and pain I thought only of you; I rose from it animated by the hope of winning you! Though, during the danger of my wound, and my consequent illness, your parents alone, of all my intimate acquaintances, neglected to honour with an inquiry the man whom you professed to consecrate with your regard, yet scarcely could my hand trace a single sentence before I wrote to you requesting an interview, in order to disclose my birth, and claim your plighted faith! That letter was returned to me unanswered, unopened. My friend and benefactor, whose fortune I now inherit, promised to call upon your father and advocate my cause. Death anticipated his kindness. As soon as my sorrow for his loss permitted me, I came to this very spot! For three days I hovered about your house, seeking the meeting that you would fain deny me now. I could not any longer bear the torturing suspense I endured—I wrote to you—your father answered the letter. Here—here I have it still: read!—note well the cool, the damning insult of each line. I see that you knew not of this; I rejoice at it! Can you wonder that, on receiving it, I subjected myself no more to such affronts? I hastened abroad. On my return I met you. Where? In crowds—in the glitter of midnight assemblies—in the whirl of what the vain call pleasure! I observed your countenance, your manner; was there in either a single token of endearing or regretful remembrance? None! I strove to harden my heart; I entered into politics, business, intrigue—I hoped, I longed, I burned to forget you, but in vain!

"At last I heard that Rumour, though it had long preceded, had not belied, the truth, and that you were to be married—married to Lord Ulswater! I will not say what I suffered, or how idly I summoned pride to resist affection! But I would not have come now to molest you, Flora—to

trouble your nuptial rejoicings with one thought of me, if, forgive me, I had not suddenly dreamt that I had cause to hope you had mistaken, not rejected, my heart; that—you turn away, Flora—you blush—you weep!—oh, tell me, by one word, one look, that I was not deceived!"

"No, no, Clarence," said Flora, struggling with her tears; "it is too late, too late now! Why, why did I not know this before? I have promised, I am pledged—in less than two months I shall be the wife of another!"

"Never," cried Clarence, "never! You promised on a false belief; they will not bind you to such a promise. Who is he that claims you? I am his equal in birth—in the world's name—and oh, by what worlds his superior in love! I will advance my claim to you in his very teeth—nay, I will not stir from these domains till you, your father, and my rival, have repaired my wrongs."

"Be it so, sir!" cried a voice behind, and Clarence turned and beheld Lord Ulswater! His dark countenance was flushed with rage, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal; and the smile of scorn that he strove to summon to his lip made a ghastly and unnatural contrast with the lowering of his brow, and the fire of his eyes. "Be it so, sir," he said, slowly advancing, and confronting Clarence. "You will dispute my claims to the hand Lady Flora Ardenne has long promised to one who, however unworthy of the gift, knows, at least, how to defend it. It is well; let us finish the dispute elsewhere. It is not the first time we shall have met, if not as rivals, as foes."

Clarence turned from him without reply, for he saw Lady Westborough had just entered the pavilion, and stood mute and transfixed at the door, with surprise, fear, and anger depicted upon her regal and beautiful countenance.

"It is to you madam," said Clarence, approaching towards her, "that I venture to appeal. Your daughter and I, four long years ago, exchanged our vows; you flattered me with the hope that those vows were not displeasing to you; since then, a misunderstanding, deadly to my happi-

ness and to hers, divided us. I come now to explain it. My birth may have seemed obscure; I come to clear it: my conduct doubtful; I come to vindicate it. I find Lord Ulswater my rival. I am willing to compare my pretensions to his. I acknowledge that he has titles which I have not, —that he has wealth, to which mine is but competence—but titles and wealth, as the means of happiness, are to be referred to your daughter, to none else. You have only, in an alliance with me, to consider my character and my lineage: the latter flows from blood as pure as that which warms the veins of my rival; the former stands already upon an eminence to which Lord Ulswater, in his loftiest visions, could never aspire. For the rest, madam I adjure you, solemnly, as you value your peace of mind, your daughter's happiness, your freedom from the agonies of future remorse, and unavailing regret—I adjure you not to divorce those whom God, who speaks in the deep heart and the plighted vow, has already joined. This is a question in which your daughter's permanent woe or lasting happiness from this present hour to the last sand of life is concerned. It is to her that I refer it—let her be the judge."

And Clarence moved from Lady Westborough, who, agitated, confused, awed by the spell of a power and a nature of which she had not dreamed, stood pale and speechless, vainly endeavouring to reply—he moved from her towards Lady Flora, who leant, sobbing and convulsed with contending emotions, against the wall; but Lord Ulswater, whose fiery blood was boiling with passion, placed himself between Clarence and the unfortunate object of the contention.

"Touch her not, approach her not!" he said, with a fierce and menacing tone. "Till you have proved your pretensions superior to mine, unknown, presuming, and probably base-born, as you are, you will only pass over my body to your claims."

Clarence stood still for one moment, evidently striving to

master the wrath which literally swelled his form beyond its ordinary proportions; and Lady Westborough, recovering herself in the brief pause, passed between the two, and, taking her daughter's arm, led her from the pavilion.

"Stay, madam, for one instant!" cried Clarence, and he caught hold of her robe.

Lady Westborough stood quite erect and still; and drawing her stately figure to its full height, said with that quiet dignity by which a woman so often stills the angrier passions of men, "I lay the prayer and command of a mother upon you, Lord Ulswater, and on you, sir, whatever be your real rank and name, not to make mine and my daughter's presence the scene of a contest which dishonours both. Still farther, if Lady Flora's hand and my approval be an object of desire to either, I make it a peremptory condition with both of you, that a dispute already degrading to her name pass not from word to act. For you, Mr. Linden, if so I may call you, I promise that my daughter shall be left free and unbiased to give that reply to your singular conduct which I doubt not her own dignity and sense will suggest."

"By Heaven!" exclaimed Lord Ulswater, utterly beside himself with rage which, suppressed at the beginning of Lady Westborough's speech, had been kindled into double fury by its conclusion, "you will not suffer Lady Flora, no, nor any one but her affianced bridegroom, her only legitimate defender, to answer this arrogant intruder! You cannot think that her hand, the hand of my future wife, shall trace line or word to one who has so insulted her with his addresses and me with his rivalry."

"Man!" cried Clarence, abruptly, and seizing Lord Ulswater fiercely by the arm, "there are some causes which will draw fire from ice—beware—beware how you incense me to pollute my soul with the blood of a——"

"What!" exclaimed Lord Ulswater.

Clarence bent down and whispered one word in his ear.

Had that word been the spell with which the sorcerers

of old disarmed the fiend, it could not have wrought a greater change upon Lord Ulswater's mien and face. He staggered back several paces; the glow of his swarthy cheek faded into a deathlike paleness; the word which passion had conjured to his tongue died there in silence; and he stood with eyes dilated and fixed on Clarence's face, on which their gaze seemed to force some unwilling certainty.

But Linden did not wait for him to recover his self-possession; he hurried after Lady Westborough, who, with her daughter, was hastening home.

"Pardon me, Lady Westborough," he said, as he approached, with a tone and air of deep respect, "pardon me—but will you suffer me to hope that Lady Flora and yourself will, in a moment of greater calmness, consider over all I have said?—and—that she—that you, Lady Flora (added he, changing the object of his address), will vouchsafe one line of unprejudiced, unbiased reply, to a love which, however misrepresented and calumniated, has in it, I dare to say, nothing that can disgrace her to whom, with an enduring constancy, and undimmed, though unhoping, ardour, it has been inviolably dedicated?"

Lady Flora, though she spoke not, lifted her eyes to his, and in that glance was a magic which made his heart burn with a sudden and flashing joy that atoned for the darkness of years.

"I assure you, sir," said Lady Westborough, touched, in spite of herself, with the sincerity and respect of Clarence's bearing, "that Lady Flora will reply to any letter of explanation or proposal: for myself, I will not even see her answer. Where shall it be sent to you?"

"I have taken my lodgings at the inn by your park gates. I shall remain there till—till——"

Clarence paused, for his heart was full; and, leaving the sentence to be concluded as his listeners pleased, he drew himself aside from their paths, and suffered them to proceed.

As he was feeding his eyes with the last glimpse of their forms, ere a turn in the grounds snatched them from his view, he heard a rapid step behind, and Lord Ulswater, approaching, laid his hand upon Linden's shoulder, and said calmly,

"Are you furnished with proof to support the word you uttered?"

"I am!" replied Clarence, haughtily.

"And will you favour me with it?"

"At your leisure, my lord," rejoined Clarence.

"Enough!—Name your time, and I will attend you."

"On Tuesday—I require till then to produce my witnesses.

"So be it—yet stay: on Tuesday I have military business at W——, some miles hence—the next day let it be—the place of meeting where you please."

"Here, then, my lord," answered Clarence; "you have insulted me grossly before Lady Westborough and your affianced bride, and before them my vindication and answer should be given."

"You are right," said Lord Ulswater; "be it here, at the hour of twelve." Clarence bowed his assent and withdrew.

Lord Ulswater remained on the spot, with downcast eyes, and a brow on which thought had succeeded passion.

"If true," said he aloud, though unconsciously, "if this be true, why, then I owe him reparation, and he shall have it at my hands. I owe it to him on my account, and that of one now no more. Till we meet, I will not again see Lady Flora; after that meeting, perhaps I may resign her for ever."

And with these words the young nobleman, who, despite of many evil and overbearing qualities, had, as we have said, his redeeming virtues, in which a capricious and unsteady generosity was one, walked slowly to the house, wrote a brief note to Lady Westborough, the purport of which the next chapter will disclose, and then, summoning his horse, flung himself on its back, and rode hastily away.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

We will examine if those accidents,
Which common fame calls injuries, happen to him
Deservedly or no.—*The New Inn.*

FROM LORD ULSWATER TO LADY WESTBOROUGH.

"FORGIVE me, dearest Lady Westborough, for my violence—you know and will allow for the infirmities of my temper. I have to make you and Lady Flora one request, which I trust you will not refuse me.

"Do not see, or receive any communication from, Mr. Linden till Wednesday; and on that day, at the hour of twelve, suffer me to meet him at your house. I will then either prove him to be the basest of impostors, or, if I fail in this, and Lady Flora honours my rival with one sentiment of preference, I will, without a murmur, submit to her decree and my rejection. Dare I trust that this petition will be accorded to one who is with great regard and esteem, &c. &c. &c."

"This is fortunate," said Lady Westborough gently to her daughter, who, leaning her head on her mother's bosom, suffered hopes, the sweeter for their long sleep, to divide, if not wholly to possess, her heart. "We shall have now time well and carefully to reflect over what will be best for your future happiness. We owe this delay to one to whom you have been affianced. Let us, therefore, now merely write to Mr. Linden, to inform him of Lord Ulswater's request; and to say that if he will meet his lordship at the time appointed, we, that is *I*, shall be happy to see him."

Lady Flora sighed, but she saw the reasonableness of her mother's proposal, and, pressing Lady Westborough's hand, murmured her assent.

"At all events," thought Lady Westborough, as she wrote to Clarence, "the affair can but terminate to advantage. If Lord Ulswater proves Mr. Linden's unworthiness, the suit of the latter is, of course, at rest for ever: if not, and Mr. Linden be indeed all that he asserts, my daughter's choice cannot be an election of reproach; Lord Ulswater promises peaceably to withdraw his pretensions; and though Mr. Linden may not possess his rank or fortune, he is certainly one with whom, if of ancient blood, any family would be proud of an alliance."

Blending with these reflections a considerable share of curiosity and interest in a secret which partook so strongly of romance, Lady Westborough despatched her note to Clarence. The answer returned was brief, respectful, and not only acquiescent in, but grateful for, the proposal.

With this arrangement both Lady Westborough and Lady Flora were compelled, though with very different feelings, to be satisfied; and an agreement was established between them, to the effect that if Linden's name passed unblemished through the appointed ordeal, Lady Flora was to be left to, and favoured in, her own election; while, on the contrary, if Lord Ulswater succeeded in the proof he had spoken of, his former footing in the family was to be fully re-established, and our unfortunate adventurer for ever discarded.

To this Lady Flora readily consented; for with a sanguine and certain trust in her lover's truth and honour, which was tenfold more strong for her late suspicions, she would not allow herself a doubt as to the result; and with an impatience, mingled with a rapturous exhilaration of spirit, which brought back to her the freshness and radiancy of her youngest years, she counted the hours and moments to the destined day.

While such was the state of affairs at Westborough Park, Clarence was again on horseback, and on another excursion. By the noon of the day following that which had seen his eventful meeting with Lady Flora, he found

himself approaching the extreme boundaries of the county in which Mordaunt Court, and the memorable town of W——, were situated. The characteristics of the country were now materially changed from those which gave to the vicinity of Algernon's domains its wild and uncultivated aspect.

As Clarence slowly descended a hill of considerable steepness and length, a prospect of singular and luxurious beauty opened to his view. The noblest of England's rivers was seen through "turfs and shades and flowers," pursuing "its silver-winding way." On the opposite banks lay, embosomed in the golden glades of autumn, the busy and populous town that from the height seemed still and lifeless as an enchanted city, over which the mid-day sun hung like a guardian spirit. Behind, in sweeping diversity stretched wood and dale, and fields despoiled of their rich harvest, yet still presenting a yellow surface to the eye; and ever and anon some bright patch of green, demanding the gaze as if by a lingering spell from the past spring; while, here and there, spire and hamlet studded the landscape, or some lowly cot lay, backed by the rising ground or the silent woods, white and solitary and sending up its faint tribute of smoke in spires to the altars of Heaven. The river was more pregnant of life than its banks: barge and boat were gliding gaily down the wave, and the glad oar of the frequent and slender vessels consecrated to pleasure was seen dimpling the water, made by distance smoother than glass.

On the right side of Clarence's road, as he descended the hill, lay wide plantations of fir and oak, divided from the road by a park paling, the uneven sides of which were covered with brown moss, and which, at rare openings in the young wood, gave glimpses of a park, seemingly extending over great space, the theatre of many a stately copse and oaken grove, which might have served the Druids with fane and temple meet for the savage sublimity of their worship.

Upon these unfrequented views, Clarence checked his

horse, and gazed with emotions sweet yet bitter, over the pales, along the green expanse which they contained. And once, when through the trees he caught a slight glimpse of the white walls of the mansion they adorned, all the years of his childhood seemed to rise on his heart, thrilling to its farthest depths with a mighty and sorrowful, yet sweet, melody, and

Singing of boyhood back—the voices of his home.

Home! yes, amidst those groves had the April of his life lavished its mingled smiles and tears! There was the spot hallowed by his earliest joys! and the scene of sorrows still more sacred than joys!—and now, after many years, the exiled boy came back, a prosperous and thoughtful man, to take but one brief glance of that home which to him had been less hospitable than a stranger's dwelling, and to find a witness among those who remembered him, of his very birth and identity!

He wound the ascent at last, and entering a small town at the foot of the hill, which was exactly facing the larger one on the opposite shore of the river, put up his horse at one of the inns and then, with a beating heart, remounted the hill, and entering the park by one of its lodges, found himself once more in the haunts of his childhood.

CHAPTER LXIX.

Oh, the steward, the steward—I might have guessed as much.
Tales of the Crusaders.

The evening was already beginning to close, and Clarence was yet wandering in the park, and retracing, with his heart's eye, each knoll, and tree, and tuft, once so familiar to his wanderings.

At the time we shall again bring him personally before the reader, he was leaning against an iron fence that, run-

ning along the left wing of the house, separated the pleasure-grounds from the park, and gazing, with folded arms and wistful eyes, upon the scene on which the dusk of twilight was gradually gathering.

The house was built originally in the reign of Charles II.; it had since received alteration and additions, and now presented to the eye a vast pile of Grecian, or rather Italian, architecture, heterogeneously blended with the massive window, the stiff coping, and the heavy roof which the age immediately following the Revolution introduced. The extent of the building, and the grandeur of the circling demesnes, were sufficient to render the mansion imposing in effect; while, perhaps, the style of the architecture was calculated to conjoin a stately comfort with magnificence, and to atone in solidity for any deficiency in grace.

At a little distance from the house, and placed on a much more commanding site, were some ancient and ivy-grown ruins, now scanty indeed, and fast mouldering into decay, but sufficient to show the antiquarian the remains of what once had been a hold of no ordinary size and power. These were the wrecks of the old mansion, which was recorded by tradition to have been reduced to this state by accidental fire, during the banishment of its loyal owner in the time of the Protectorate. Upon his return, the present house was erected.

As Clarence was thus stationed he perceived an elderly man approach towards him. "This is fortunate," said he to himself—"the very person I have been watching for. Well, years have passed lightly over old Wardour; still the same precise garb—the same sturdy and slow step—the same upright form."

The person thus designated now drew near enough for parlance; and, in a tone a little authoritative, though very respectful, inquired if Clarence had any business to transact with him.

"I beg pardon," said Clarence, slouching his hat over his face, "for lingering so near the house at this hour; but I

have seen it many years ago, and indeed been a guest within its walls; and it is rather my interest for an old friend, than my curiosity to examine a new one, which you are to blame for my trespass."

"Oh, sir," answered Mr. Wardour, a short and rather stout man, about sixty-four, attired in a chocolate coat, grey breeches, and silk stockings of the same dye, which, by the waning light, took a sombrer and sadder hue—"oh, sir—pray make no apology. I am only sorry the hour is so late that I cannot offer to show you the interior of the house: perhaps, if you are staying in the neighbourhood, you would like to see it to-morrow. You were here, I take it, sir, in my old lord's time?"

"I was!—upon a visit to his second son—we had been boys together."

"What! Master Clinton?" cried the old man, with extreme animation; and then suddenly changing his voice, added in a subdued and saddened tone, "Ah, poor young gentleman, I wonder where he is now?"

"Why—is he not in this country?" asked Clarence.

"Yes—no—that is, I can't exactly say where he is—I wish I could—poor Master Clinton—I loved him as my own son."

"You surprise me," said Clarence. "Is there anything in the fate of Clinton L'Estrange that calls forth your pity? If so, you would gratify a much better feeling than curiosity if you would inform me of it. The fact is, that I came here to seek him; for I have been absent from the country many years, and on my return, my first inquiry was for my old friend and schoolfellow. None knew anything of him in London, and I imagined, therefore, that he might have settled down into a country gentleman. I was fully prepared to find him marshalling the fox-hounds or beating the preserves; and you may consequently imagine my mortification on learning, at my inn, that he had not been residing here for many years; further I know not!"

"Ay—ay—sir," said the old steward, who had listened

very attentively to Clarence's detail, "had you pressed one of the village gossips a little closer, you would doubtless have learned more. But 'tis a story I don't much love telling, although formerly I could have talked of Master Clinton by the hour together, to any one who would have had the patience to listen to me."

"You have really created in me a very painful desire to learn more," said Clarence; "and if I am not intruding on any family secrets, you would oblige me greatly by whatever information you may think proper to afford to an early and attached friend of the person in question."

"Well, sir, well," replied Mr. Wardour, who, without imputation on his discretion, loved talking as well as any other old gentleman of sixty-four, "if you will condescend to step up to my house, I shall feel happy and proud to converse with a friend of my dear young master's; and you are heartily welcome to the information I can give you."

"I thank you sincerely," said Clarence; "but suffer me to propose, as an amendment to your offer, that you accompany me for an hour or two to my inn."

"Nay, sir," answered the old gentleman, in a piqued tone, "I trust you will not disdain to honour me with your company. Thank Heaven, I can afford to be hospitable now and then."

Clarence, who seemed to have his own reasons for the amendment he had proposed, still struggled against this offer, but was at last, from fear of offending the honest steward, obliged to accede.

Striking across a path, which led through a corner of the plantation, to a space of ground containing a small garden, quaintly trimmed in the Dutch taste, and a brick house of moderate dimensions, half overgrown with ivy and jessamine, Clarence and his inviter paused at the door of the said mansion, and the latter welcomed his guest to his abode.

"Pardon me," said Clarence, as a damsel in waiting opened the door, "but a very severe attack of rheumatism

obliges me to keep on my hat; you will, I hope indulge me in my rudeness."

"To be sure—to be sure, sir. I myself suffer terribly from rheumatism in the winter—though you look young, sir, very young, to have an old man's complaint. Ah, the people of my day were more careful of themselves, and that is the reason we are such stout fellows in our age."

And the worthy steward looked complacently down at legs which very substantially filled their comely investments.

"True, sir," said Clarence, laying his hand upon that of the steward, who was just about to open the door of an apartment; "but suffer me at least to request you not to introduce me to any of the ladies of your family. I could not, were my very life at stake, think of affronting them by not doffing my hat. I have the keenest sense of what is due to the sex, and I must seriously entreat you, for the sake of my health, during the whole of the coming winter, to suffer our conversation not to take place in their presence."

"Sir—I honour your politeness," said the prim little steward: "I, myself, like every true Briton, reverence the ladies; we will, therefore, retire to my study. Mary, girl," turning to the attendant, "see that we have a nice chop for supper in half an hour; and tell your mistress that I have a gentleman of quality with me upon particular business, and must not be disturbed."

With these injunctions, the steward led the way to the farther end of the house, and, having ushered his guest into a small parlour, adorned with sundry law-books, a great map of the estate, a print of the late owner of it, a rusty gun, slung over the fireplace, two stuffed pheasants, and a little mahogany buffet—having, we say, led Clarence to this sanctuary of retiring stewardship, he placed a seat for him and said—

"Between you and me, sir, be it respectfully said, I am not sorry that our little confabulation should pass alone. Ladies are very delightful—very delightful, certainly; but they won't let one tell a story one's own way—they are

fidgety, you know, sir—fidgety—nothing more; 'tis a trifle, but it is unpleasant. Besides, my wife was Master Clinton's foster-mother, and she can't hear a word about him, without running on into a long rigmarole of what he did as a baby, and so forth. I like people to be chatty, sir, but not garrulous; I can't bear garrulity—at least in a female. But, suppose, sir, we defer our story till after supper? A glass of wine or warm punch makes talk glide more easily; besides, sir, I want something to comfort me when I talk about Master Clinton. Poor gentleman, he was so comely, so handsome!"

"Did you think so?" said Clarence, turning towards the fire.

"Think so!" ejaculated the steward, almost angrily; and forthwith he launched out into an encomium on the perfections, personal, moral, and mental, of Master Clinton which lasted till the gentle Mary entered to lay the cloth. This reminded the old steward of the glass of wine which was so efficacious in making talk glide easily; and, going to the buffet before mentioned, he drew forth two bottles, both of port. Having carefully and warily decanted both, he changed the subject of his praise; and, assuring Clarence that the wine he was about to taste was at least as old as Master Clinton, having been purchased in joyous celebration of the young gentleman's birthday, he whiled away the minutes with a glowing eulogy on its generous qualities, till Mary entered with the supper.

Clarence, with an appetite sharpened, despite his romance, by a long fast, did ample justice to the fare; and the old steward, warming into familiarity with the virtues of the far-famed port, chatted and laughed in a strain half simple and half shrewd.

The fire being stirred up to a free blaze, the hearth swept, and all the tokens of supper, save and except the kingly bottle and its subject glasses, being removed, the steward and his guest drew closer to each other, and the former began his story.

CHAPTER LXX.

The actors are at hand, and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.
Midsummer-Night's Dream.

"You know, probably, sir, that my late lord was twice married; by his first wife he had three children, only one of whom, the youngest, though now the present earl, survived the first period of infancy. When Master Francis, as we always called him, in spite of his accession to the title of viscount, was about six years old, my lady died, and, a year afterwards, my lord married again. His second wife was uncommonly handsome: she was a Miss Talbot (a Catholic), daughter of Colonel Talbot, and niece to the celebrated beau, Squire Talbot of Scarsdale Park. Poor lady! they say that she married my lord through a momentary pique against a former lover. However that may be, she was a fine, high-spirited creature—very violent in temper, to be sure, but generous and kind when her passion was over; and however haughty to her equals, charitable and compassionate to the poor.

"She had but one son, Master Clinton. Never, sir, shall I forget the rejoicings that were made at his birth; for my lord doted on his second wife, and had disliked his first, whom he had married for her fortune; and it was therefore natural that he should prefer the child of the present wife to Master Francis. Ah, it is sad to think how love can change! Well, sir, my lord seemed literally to be wrapt up in the infant: he nursed it and fondled it, and hung over it, as if he had been its mother rather than its father. My lady desired that it might be christened by one of her family names; and my lord consenting, it was called Clinton.—(The wine is with you, sir! Do observe that it has not changed colour in the least, notwithstanding its age).

"My lord was fond of a quiet, retired life; indeed, he

was a great scholar, and spent the chief part of his time among his books. Dr. Latinas, the young gentleman's tutor, said his lordship made Greek verses better than Dr. Latinas could make English ones, so you may judge of his learning. But my lady went constantly to town, and was among the gayest of the gay; nor did she often come down here without bringing a whole troop of guests. Lord help us, what goings on there used to be at the great house!—such dancing and music, and dining, and supping, and shooting-parties, fishing-parties, gipsy-parties; you would have thought all England was merry-making there.

"But my lord, though he indulged my lady in all her whims and extravagance, seldom took much share in them himself. He was constantly occupied with his library and children, nor did he ever suffer either Master Francis or Master Clinton to mix with the guests. He kept them very close at their studies, and when the latter was six years old, I do assure you, sir, he could say his *Propria quæ maribus* better than I can.—(You don't drink, sir.) When Master Francis was sixteen, and Master Clinton eight, the former was sent abroad on his travels with a German tutor, and did not return to England for many years afterwards; meanwhile Master Clinton grew up to the age of fourteen, increasing in comeliness and goodness. He was very fond of his studies, much more so than Master Francis had been, and was astonishingly forward for his years. So my lord loved him better and better, and would scarcely ever suffer him to be out of his sight.

"When Master Clinton was about the age I mentioned, viz., fourteen, a gentleman of the name of Sir Clinton Manners became a constant visitor at the house. Report said that he was always about my lady in London at Ranelagh, and the ball-rooms and routs, and all the fine places—and certainly he was scarcely ever from her side in the pleasure parties at the park. But my lady said that he was a cousin of hers, and an old playmate in childhood, and so he was—and unhappily for her, something more

too. My Lord, however, shut up in his library, did not pay any attention to my lady's intimacy with Sir Clinton; on the contrary, as he was a cousin and friend of hers, his lordship seemed always happy to see him, and was the only person in the neighbourhood who had no suspicion of what was going on.

"Oh, sir, it is a melancholy story, and I can scarcely persuade myself to tell it. (It is really delicious wine this—six-and-twenty years old last *birthday*—to say nothing of its age before I bought it)—Ah!—Well, sir, the blow came at last like a thunderclap—my lady, finding disguise was in vain, went off with Sir Clinton. Letters were discovered which showed that they had corresponded for years—that he was her lover before marriage—that she, in a momentary passion with him, had accepted my lord's offer—that she had always repented her precipitation—and that she had called her son after his name—all this, and much more, sir, did my lord learn, as it were, at a single blow.

"He obtained a divorce, and Sir Clinton and my lady went abroad. But from that time my lord was never the same man. Always proud and gloomy, he now became intolerably violent and morose. He shut himself up, saw no company of any description, rarely left the house, and never the park—and, from being one of the gayest places in the country, sir, the mansion became as dreary and deserted as if it had been haunted. (It is for you to begin the second bottle, sir.)

"But the most extraordinary change in my lord was in his conduct to Master Clinton—from doting upon him, to a degree that would have spoilt any temper less sweet than my poor young master's, he took the most violent aversion to him. From the circumstance of his name, and the long intimacy existing between my lady and her lover, his lordship would not believe that Master Clinton was his own child; and indeed I must confess there seemed good ground for his suspicions. Besides this, Master Clinton took very much after his mother. He had her eyes, hair, and beau-

tiful features, so that my lord could never see him without being reminded of his disgrace; therefore whenever the poor young gentleman came into his presence, he would drive him out, with oaths and threats which rang through the whole house. He could not even bear that he should have any attendance or respect from the servants, for he considered him quite as an alien like, and worse than a stranger; and his lordship's only delight seemed to consist in putting upon him every possible indignity and affront. But Master Clinton was a high-spirited young gentleman, and after having in vain endeavoured to soothe my lord by compliance and respect, he at last utterly avoided his lordship's presence.

"He gave up his studies in a great measure, and wandered about the park and woods all day, and sometimes even half the night; his mother's conduct, and his father's unkindness seemed to prey upon his health and mind, and, at last, he grew almost as much altered as my lord. From being one of the merriest boys possible, full of life and spirits, he became thoughtful and downcast, his step lost its lightness, and his eye all the fire which used once quite to warm one's heart when one looked at it; in short, sir, the sins of the mother were visited as much upon the child as the husband. (Not the least tawny, sir, you see, though it is so old!)

"My lord at first seemed to be glad that he now never saw his son, but, by degrees, I think he missed the pleasure of venting his spleen upon him; and so he ordered my young master not to stir out without his leave, and confined him closer than ever to his studies. Well, sir, if it were not for this port I could not get out another sentence—there used then to be sad scenes between them: my lord was a terribly passionate man, and said things sharper than a two-edged sword, as the psalms express it; and though Master Clinton was one of the mildest and best-tempered boys imaginable, yet he could not at all times curb his spirit; and, to my mind, when a man is perpetually de-

claring he is not your father, one may now and then be forgiven in forgetting that you are to behave as his son.

"Things went on in this way sadly enough for about three years and a half, when Master Clinton was nearly eighteen. One evening, after my lord had been unusually stormy, Master Clinton's spirit warmed, I suppose, and, from word to word, the dispute increased, till my lord, in a furious rage, ordered in the servants, and told them to horsewhip his son. Imagine, sir, what a disgrace to that noble house! But there was not one of them who would not rather have cut off his right hand than laid a finger upon Master Clinton, so greatly was he beloved; and, at last, my lord summoned his own gentleman, a German, six feet high, entirely devoted to his lordship, and commanded him, upon pain of instant dismissal, to make use, in his presence, of a horsewhip which he put into his hand.

"The German did not dare refuse, so he approached Master Clinton. The servants were still in the room, and perhaps they would have been bold enough to rescue Master Clinton, had there been any need of their assistance; but he was a tall youth, as bold as a hero, and, when the German approached, he caught him by the throat, threw him down, and very nearly strangled him; he then, while my lord was speechless with rage, left the room, and did not return all night. (What a body it has, sir—Ah!)

"The next morning I was in a little room adjoining my lord's study, looking over some papers and maps. His lordship did not know of my presence, but was sitting alone at breakfast, when Master Clinton suddenly entered the study; the door leading to my room was ajar, and I heard all the conversation that ensued.

"My lord asked him very angrily how he had dared absent himself all night; but Master Clinton, making no reply to this question, said, in a very calm, loud voice, which I think I hear now,—'My lord, after the insult you have offered to me, it is perhaps unnecessary to observe that

nothing could induce me to remain under your roof. I come, therefore, to take my last leave of you.'

"He paused, and my lord (probably like me, being taken by surprise) making no reply, he continued, 'You have often told me, my lord, that I am not your son; if this be possible, so much the more must you rejoice at the idea of ridding your presence of an intruder.' 'And how, sir, do you expect to live, except upon my bounty?' exclaimed my lord. 'You remember,' answered my young master, 'that a humble dependent of my mother's family, who had been our governess in childhood, left me, at her death, the earnings of her life. I believe they amount to nearly a thousand pounds—I look to your lordship's honour either for the principal or the yearly interest, as may please you best: farther I ask not from you.' 'And do you think, sir,' cried my lord, almost screaming with passion, 'that upon that beggarly pittance you shall go forth to dishonour more than it is yet dishonoured, the name of my ancient house? Do you think, sir, that that name to which you have no pretension, though the law iniquitously grants it you, shall be sullied either with trade or robbery? for to one or the other you must necessarily be driven.' 'I foresaw your speech, my lord, and am prepared with an answer. Far be it from me to thrust myself into any family, the head of which thinks proper to reject me—far be it from me to honour my humble fortunes with a name which I am as willing as yourself to disown: I purpose, therefore, to adopt a new one, and whatever may be my future fate, that name will screen me both from your remembrance and the world's knowledge. Are you satisfied now, my lord?'

"His lordship did not answer for some minutes: at last, he said sneeringly, 'Go, boy, go! I am delighted to hear you have decided so well. Leave word with my steward where you wish your clothes to be sent to you: Heaven forbid I should rob you either of your wardrobe or your princely fortune. Wardour will transmit to you the latter, even to the last penny, by the same conveyance as that

which is honoured by the former. And now good morning, sir; yet stay, and mark my words—never dare to re-enter my house, or to expect an iota more of fortune or favour from me. And hark you, sir—if you dare violate your word, if you dare, during my life, at least, assume a name which you were born to sully, my curse, my deepest, heartiest, eternal curse, be upon your head in this world and the next!' 'Fear not, my lord, my word is pledged,' said the young gentleman; and the next moment I heard his parting step in the hall.

"Sir, my heart was full (your glass is empty!) and my head spun round as if I were on a precipice: but I was determined my young master should not go till I had caught another glimpse of his dear face, so I gently left the room I was in, and hastening out of the house by a private entrance, met Master Clinton in the park, not very far from the spot where I saw you, sir, just now. To my surprise, there was no sign of grief or agitation upon his countenance. I had never seen him look so proud, or, for years, so happy.

"'Wardour,' said he, in a gay tone, when he saw me, 'I was going to your house: my father has at last resolved that I should, like my brother, commence my travels, and I wish to leave you the address of the place to which my clothes, &c., will be sent.'

"I could not contain any longer when I heard this, sir; I burst into tears, confessed that I had accidentally heard his conversation with my lord, and besought him not to depart so hastily, and with so small a fortune; but he shook his head, and would not hear me. 'Believe me, my good Wardour,' said he, 'that since my unhappy mother's flight, I have never felt so elated or so happy as I do now: one should go through what I have done, to learn the rapture of independence.' He then told me to have his luggage sent to him, under his initials of C. L., at the Golden Fleece, the principal inn in the town of W——, which you know, sir, is at the other end of the county, on

the road to London; and then, kindly shaking me by the hand, he broke away from me; but he turned back before he had got three paces, and said (and then, for the first time, the pride of his countenance fell, and the tears stood in his eyes), 'Wardour, do not divulge what you have heard: put as good a face upon my departure as you can, and let the blame, if any, fall upon me, not upon your lord: after all he is to be pitied, not blamed, and I can never forget that he once loved me.' He did not wait for my answer, perhaps he did not like to show me how much he was affected, but hurried down the park, and I soon lost sight of him. My lord that very morning sent for me, demanded what address his son had left, and gave me a letter, inclosing, I suppose, a bill for my poor young master's fortune, ordering it to be sent with clothes immediately.

"Sir, I have never seen or heard aught of the dear gentleman since; you must forgive me, I cannot help tears, sir —(the wine is with you)."

"But the mother, the mother!" said Clarence, earnestly; "what became of her? she died abroad, two years since, did she not?"

"She did, sir," answered the honest steward, refilling his glass. "They say that she lived very unhappily with Sir Clinton, who did not marry her; till all of a sudden she disappeared, none knew whither."

Clarence redoubled his attention.

"At last," resumed the steward, "two years ago, a letter came from her to my lord; she was a nun in some convent (in Italy I think), to which she had, at the time of her disappearance, secretly retired. The letter was written on her death-bed, and so affectingly, I suppose, that even my stern lord was in tears, for several days after he received it. But the principal passage in it was relative to her son: it assured my lord (for so with his own lips he told me just before he died, some months ago), that Master Clinton was in truth his son, and that it was not till she had been tempted many years after her marriage, that she had fall-

en; she implored my lord to believe this 'on the word of one for whom earth and earth's objects were no more;' those were her words.

"Six months ago when my lord lay on the bed from which he never rose, he called me to him, and said—'Wardour, you have always been the faithful servant of our house, and warmly attached to my second son; tell my poor boy, if ever you see him, that I did at last open my eyes to my error, and acknowledge him as my child; tell him that I have desired his brother (who was then, sir, kneeling by my lord's side), as he values my blessing, to seek him out and repair the wrong I have done him; and add, that my best comfort in death was the hope of his forgiveness.'"

"Did he, did he say *that?*" exclaimed Clarence, who had been violently agitated during the latter part of this recital, and now sprang from his seat—"My, father, my father! would that I had borne with thee more!—mine—mine was the fault—from *thee* should have come the forgiveness!"

The old steward sat silent and aghast. At that instant his wife entered, with a message of chiding at the lateness of the hour upon her lip, but she started back when she saw Clarence's profile, as he stood leaning against the wall: "Good Heavens!" cried she, "is it, is it—yes, it is my young master, my own foster-son!"

Rightly had Clarence conjectured, when he had shunned her presence. Years had, indeed, wrought a change in his figure and face: acquaintance, servant, friend, relation,—the remembrance of his features had passed from all: but she who had nursed him as an infant on her lap, and fed him from her breast, she who had joined the devotion of clanship to the fondness of a mother, knew him at a glance. "Yes," cried he, as he threw himself into her withered and aged arms, "it is I, the child *you* reared, come, after many years, to find too late, when a father is no more, that he had a right to a father's home."

CHAPTER LXXI.

Let us go in,
And charge us there upon interrogatories.—SHAKSPEARE.

"BUT did not any one recognise you in your change of name?" said the old foster-mother, looking fondly upon Clarence, as he sat the next morning by her side. "How could any one forget so winsome a face who had once seen it?"

"You don't remember," said Clarence (as we will yet continue to call our hero), smiling, "that your husband had forgotten it."

"Ay, sir," cried the piqued steward, "but that was because you wore your hat slouched over your eyes; if you had taken off *that*, I should have known you directly."

"However that may be," said Clarence, unwilling to dwell longer on an occurrence which he saw hurt the feel, ings of the kind Mr. Wardour, "it is very easy to explain how I preserved my incognito. You recollect that my father never suffered me to mix with my mother's guests: so that I had no chance of their remembering me, especially as, during the last three years and a half, no stranger had ever entered our walls. Add to this, that I was in the very time of life in which a few years work the greatest change, and on going to London, I was thrown entirely among people who could never have seen me before. Fortunate for me, I became acquainted with my mother's uncle —circumstances subsequently led me to disclose my birth to him, upon a promise that he would never call me by any other name than that which I had assumed. He, who was the best, the kindest, the most generous of human beings, took a liking to me. He insisted not only upon his relationship to me, as my grand-uncle, but upon the justice of repairing to me the wrongs his unhappy niece had caused me. The delicacy of his kindness—the ties of blood—and

an accident which had enabled me to be of some service to him, all prevented my resisting the weight of obligation with which he afterwards oppressed me. He procured me an appointment abroad: I remained there four years. When I returned, I entered, it is true, into very general society; but four years had, as you may perceive, altered me greatly; and even had there previously existed any chance of my being recognised, that alteration would probably have been sufficient to insure my secret."

"But your brother—my present lord—did you never meet him, sir?"

"Often, my good mother; but you remember that I was litte more than six years old when he left England, and when he next saw me I was about two-and-twenty: it would have been next to a miracle, or, at least, would have required the eyes of love like yours, to have recalled me to memory after such an absence.

"Well—to turn to my story—I succeeded, partly as his nearest relation, but principally from an affection dearer than blood, to the fortune of my grand-uncle, Mr. Talbot. Fate prospered with me: I rose in the world's esteem and honour, and soon became prouder of my borrowed appellation than of all the titles of my lordly line. Circumstances occurring within the last week, which it will be needless to relate, but which may have the greatest influence over my future life, made it necessary to do what I had once resolved I would never do—prove my identity and origin. Accordingly I came here to seek you."

"But why did not my honoured young master disclose himself last night?" asked the steward.

"I might say," answered Clarence, "because I anticipated great pleasure in a surprise; but I had another reason—it was this: I had heard of my poor father's death, and I was painfully anxious to learn if at the last he had testified any relenting towards me—and yet more so to ascertain the manner of my unfortunate mother's fate. Both abroad and in England, I had sought tidings of her

everywhere, but in vain; in mentioning my mother's retiring into a convent, you have explained the reason why my efforts were so fruitless. With these two objects in view, I thought myself more likely to learn the whole truth as a stranger than in my proper person; for in the latter case, I deemed it probable that your delicacy and kindness might tempt you to conceal whatever was calculated to wound my feelings and to exaggerate anything that might tend to flatter or to soothe them. Thank Heaven, I now learn that I have a right to the name my boyhood bore, and that my birth is not branded with the foulest of private crimes, and that in death my father's heart yearned to his too hasty but repentant son. Enough of this—I have now only to request you, my friend, to accompany me, before daybreak, on Wednesday morning, to a place several miles hence. Your presence there will be necessary to substantiate the proof for which I came hither."

"With all my heart, sir," cried the honest steward; "and after Wednesday you will, I trust, assume your rightful name?"

"Certainly," replied Clarence; "since I am no longer 'the Disowned.'"

Leaving Clarence for a brief while to renew his acquaintance with the scenes of his childhood, and to offer the tribute of his filial tears to the ashes of a father whose injustice had been but "the stinging of a heart the world had stung"—we return to some old acquaintances in the various conduct of our drama.

CHAPTER LXXII.

Upon his couch the veil'd Mokanna lay.—*The Veiled Prophet.*

The autumn sun broke through an apartment in a villa in the neighbourhood of London, furnished with the most prodigal, yet not tasteless attention to luxury and show,

within which, beside a table strewed with newspapers, letters, and accounts, lay Richard Crauford, extended carelessly upon a sofa, which might almost have contented the Sybarite who quarrelled with a rose leaf. At his elbow was a bottle half-emptied, and a wineglass just filled. An expression of triumph and enjoyment was visible upon his handsome, but usually inexpressive, countenance.

"Well," said he, taking up a newspaper, "let us read this paragraph again. What a beautiful sensation it is to see one's name in print—'We understand that Richard Crauford Esq., M.P. for ——, is to be raised to the dignity of the peerage. There does not, perhaps, exist in the country a gentleman more universally beloved and esteemed'—(mark that, Dicky Crauford)—'The invariable generosity with which his immense wealth has been employed—his high professional honour—the undeviating and consistant integrity of his political career'—(Ay, to be sure, it is only your honest fools who are inconsistent: no man can deviate who has one firm principle, self-interest) —'his manly and energetic attention to the welfare of religion'—(he—he—he!), 'conjoined to a fortune almost incalculable, render this condescension of our gracious sovereign no less judicious than deserved! We hear that the title proposed for the new peer is that of Viscount Innisdale, which, we believe, was formerly in the noble family of which Mr. Crauford is a distant branch.'

"He! he! he! Bravo! bravo! Viscount Innisdale—noble family—distant branch—the devil I am! What an ignoramus my father was not to know that! Why, rest his soul, he never knew who his grandfather was; but the world shall not be equally ignorant of that important point. Let me see, who shall be Viscount Innisdale's great-grandfather? Well, well, whoever he is, here's long life to his great-grandson! 'Incalculable fortune!' Ay, ay, I hope at all events it will never be calculated. But now for my letters. Bah—this wine is a thought too acid for the cellars of Viscount Innisdale! What, another from

Mother H——! Dark eyes, small mouth—sings like an angel—eighteen! Pish! I am too old for such follies now; 'tis not pretty for Viscount Innisdale. Humph!—Lisbon—seven hundred pounds five shillings and seven pence—half-penny, is it, or farthing? I must note that down. Loan for King of Prussia. Well, must negotiate that to-morrow. Ah, Hockit, the wine-merchant—pipe of claret in the docks—vintage of 17—. Bravo! all goes smooth for Viscount Innisdale! Pish!—from my damnable wife! What a pill for my lordship! What says she?"

"'*Dawlish, Devonshire.*

"'You have not, my dearest Richard, answered my letters for months. I do not, however, presume to complain of your silence; I know well that you have a great deal to occupy your time, both in business and pleasure. But one little line, dear Richard—one little line, surely that is not too much now and then. I am most truly sorry to trouble you again about money; and you must know that I strive to be as saving as possible;'—[Pish—curse the woman—sent her twenty pounds three months ago!]—'but I really am so distressed, and the people here are so pressing; and at all events, I cannot bear the thought of your wife being disgraced. Pray, forgive me, Richard, and believe how painful it is in me to say so much. I know you will answer this! and, oh, do, do tell me how you are.

"'Ever your affectionate wife,

"'CAROLINE CRAUFORD.'

"Was there ever a poor man so plagued? Where's my note-book? Mem.—send Car. to-morrow 20*l.* to last her the rest of the year. Mem.—Send Mother H—— 100*l.* Mem.—Pay Hockit's bill 830*l.* Bless me, what shall I do with Viscountess Innisdale? Now, if I were not married, I would be son-in-law to a duke. Mem.—Go down to Dawlish, and see if she won't die soon. Healthy situation, I fear—devilish unlucky—must be changed. Mem.—Swamps in Essex. Who's that?"

A knock at the door disturbed Mr. Crauford in his meditations. He started up, hurried the bottle and glass under the sofa, where the descending drapery completely hid them; and, taking up a newspaper, said in a gentle tone, "Come in." A small thin man, bowing at every step, entered.

"Ah! Bradley, is it you, my good fellow?" said Crauford—"glad to see you—a fine morning; but what brings you from town so early?"

"Why, sir," answered Mr. Bradley, very obsequiously, "something unpleasant has——"

"Merciful Heaven!" cried Crauford, blanched into the whiteness of death, and starting up from the sofa with a violence which frightened the timid Mr. Bradley to the other end of the room—"the counting-house—the books—all safe?"

"Yes, sir, yes, *at present*—but—"

"But what, man?"

"Why, honoured sir," returned Mr. Bradley, bowing to the ground, "your partner, Mr. Jessop, has been very inquisitive about the accounts. He says Mr. Da Costa, the Spanish merchant, has been insinuating very unpleasant hints, and that he must have a conversation with you at your earliest convenience; and when, sir, I ventured to remonstrate about the unreasonableness of attending to what Mr. Da Costa said, Mr. Jessop was quite abusive, and declared that there seemed some very mysterious communication between you (begging your pardon, sir) and me, and that he did not know what business I, who had no share in the firm, had to interfere."

"But," said Crauford, "you were civil to him—did not reply hotly—eh—my good Bradley?"

"Lord forbid, sir—Lord forbid, that I should not know my place better, or that I should give an unbecoming word to the partner of my honoured benefactor. But, sir, if I dare venture to say so, I think Mr. Jessop is a little jealous, or so, of you; he seemed quite in a passion at the para-

graph in the paper about my honoured master's becoming a lord."

"Right, honest Bradley, right: he is jealous—we must soothe him. Go, my good fellow—go to him with my compliments, and say, that I will be with him by one. Never fear, this business will be easily settled."

And bowing himself out of the room, Bradley withdrew.

Left alone, a dark cloud gathered over the brow of Mr. Crauford.

"I am on a precipice," thought he; "but if my own brain does not turn giddy with the prospect, all yet may be saved. Cruel necessity, that obliged me to admit another into the business, that foiled me of Mordaunt, and drove me upon this fawning rascal. So, so—I almost think there is a Providence, now that Mordaunt has grown rich; but then his wife died—ay—ay—God saved *him*, but the devil killed *her*.[1] He—he—he! But, seriously—seriously, there is danger in the very air I breathe! I must away to that envious Jessop instantly; but first let me finish the bottle."

CHAPTER LXXIII.

A strange harmonious inclination
Of all degrees to reformation.—*Hudibras.*

About seven miles from W——, on the main road from ——, there was in 17— a solitary public-house, which by the by is now a magnificent hotel. Like many of its brethren in the more courtly vicinity of the metropolis, this *amœnum hospitium peregrinæ gentis*, then had its peculiar renown for certain dainties of the palate; and various in degree and character were the numerous parties from the

[1] Voltaire.—"Dieu a puni ce fripon, le diable a noyé les autres."—*Candide.*

neighbouring towns and farms, which upon every legitimate holiday were wont to assemble at the mansion of mine host, of the Jolly Angler, in order to feast upon eel-pie, and grow merry over the true Herefordshire cider.

But upon that special day on which we are about to introduce our reader into the narrow confines of its common parlour, the said hostelry was crowded with persons of a very different description from the peaceful idlers who were ordinarily wont to empty mine host's larder, and forget the price of corn over the divine inspirations of pomarial nectar. Instead of the indolent, satisfied air of the saturnalian merry-maker, the vagrant angler, or the gentleman farmer, with his comely dame who "walked in silk attire, and siller had to spare;" instead of the quiet yet glad countenances of such hunters of pleasure and eaters of eel-pie, or the more obstreperous joy of urchins let loose from school to taste some brief and perennial recreation, and mine host's delicacies at the same time; instead of these, the little parlour presented a various and perturbed group, upon whose features neither eel-pie nor Herefordshire cider had wrought the relaxation of a holiday, or the serenity of a momentary content.

The day to which we now refer was the one immediately preceding that appointed for the far-famed meeting at W——; and many of the patriots, false or real, who journeyed from a distance to attend that rendezvous, had halted at our host's of the Jolly Angler; both as being within a convenient space from the appointed spot, and as a tabernacle where promiscuous intrusion and (haply) immoderate charges were less likely to occur than at the bustling and somewhat extraordinary hotels and inns of the town of W——.

The times in which this meeting was held were those of great popular excitement and discontent; and the purport of the meeting proposed was to petition Parliament against the continuance of the American war, and the king against the continuance of his ministers.

Placards, of an unusually inflammatory and imprudent nature, had given great alarm to the more sober and well-disposed persons in the neighbourhood of W——; and so much fear was felt or assumed upon the occasion that a new detachment of Lord Ulswater's regiment had been especially ordered into the town; and it was generally rumoured that the legal authorities would interfere, even by force, for the dispersion of the meeting in question. These circumstances had given the measure a degree of general and anxious interest which it would not otherwise have excited; and while everybody talked of the danger of attending the assembly, everybody resolved to thrust himself into it.

It was about the goodly hour of noon, and the persons assembled were six in number, all members of the most violent party, and generally considered by friend and foe as embracers of republican tenets. One of these, a little, oily, corpulent personage, would have appeared far too sleek and well-fed for a disturber of things existing, had not a freckled, pimpled, and fiery face, a knit brow, and a small black eye of intolerable fierceness, belied the steady and contented appearance of his frame and girth. This gentleman, by name Christopher Culpepper, spoke in a quick, muffled, shuffling sort of tone, like the pace of a Welsh pony, somewhat lame, perfectly broken-winded, but an exemplary ambler for all that.

Next to him sat, with hands clasped over his knees, a thin, small man, with a countenance prematurely wrinkled, and an air of great dejection. Poor Castleton! his had been, indeed, the bitter lot of a man, honest but weak, who attaches himself, heart and soul, to a public cause which, in his life, at least, is hopeless. Three other men were sitting by the open window, disputing, with the most vehement gestures, upon the character of Wilkes; and at the other window, alone, silent, and absorbed, sat a man whose appearance and features were singularly calculated to arrest and to concentrate attention. His raven hair, griz-

zled with the first advance of age, still preserved its strong, wiry curl, and luxuriant thickness. His brows, large, bushy, and indicative of great determination, met over eyes which at that moment were fixed upon vacancy with a look of thought and calmness very unusual to their ordinary restless and rapid glances. His mouth, that great seat of character, was firmly and obstinately shut; and though, at the first observation, its downward curve and iron severity wore the appearance of unmitigated harshness, disdain, and resolve, yet a more attentive deducer of signs from features would not have been able to detect in its expression anything resembling selfishness or sensuality, and in that absence would have found sufficient to redeem the more repellent indications of mind which it betrayed.

Presently the door was opened, and the landlord making some apology to both parties for having no other apartment unoccupied, introduced a personage whose dress and air, as well as a kind of saddle-bag, which he would not intrust to any other bearer than himself, appeared to denote him as one rather addicted to mercantile than political speculations. Certainly he did not seem much at home among the patriotic reformers, who having glared upon him for a single moment, renewed, without remark, their several attitudes or occupations.

The stranger, after a brief pause, approached the solitary reformer whom we last described; and making a salutation, half timorous and half familiar, thus accosted him—

"Your servant, Mr. Wolfe, your servant. I think I had the pleasure of hearing you a long time ago at the Westminster election: very eloquent you were, sir, very!"

Wolfe looked up for an instant at the face of the speaker, and, not recognising it, turned abruptly away, threw open the window, and, leaning out, appeared desirous of escaping from all further intrusion on the part of the stranger: but that gentleman was by no means of a nature easily abashed.

"Fine day, sir, for the time of year—very fine day, in-

deed October is a charming month, as my lamented friend and customer, the late Lady Waddilove, was accustomed to say. Talking of that, sir, as the winter is now approaching, do you not think it would be prudent, Mr. Wolfe, to provide yourself with an umbrella? I have an admirable one which I might dispose of: it is from the effects of the late Lady Waddilove. 'Brown,' said her ladyship, a short time before her death,—'Brown, you are a good creature; but you ask too much for the Dresden vase. We have known each other a long time; you must take fourteen pounds ten shillings, and you may have that umbrella, in the corner, into the bargain.' Mr. Wolfe, the bargain was completed, and the umbrella became mine—it may now be yours."

And so saying, Mr. Brown, depositing his saddle-bag on the ground, proceeded to unfold an umbrella of singular antiquity and form—a very long stick, tipped with ivory, being surmounted with about a quarter of a yard of sea-green silk, somewhat discoloured by time and wear.

"It is a beautiful article, sir," said Mr. Brown, admiringly surveying it—"is it not?"

"Pshaw!" said Wolfe, impatiently—"what have I to do with your goods and chattels? Go and palm the cheatings and impositions of your pitiful trade upon some easier gull."

"Cheatings and impositions, Mr. Wolfe!" cried the slandered Brown, perfectly aghast; "I would have you to know, sir, that I have served the first families in the country, ay, and in this county too, and never had such words applied to me before. Sir, there was the late Lady Waddilove, and the respected Mrs. Minden, *and her nephew the ambassador*, and the Duchess of Pugadale, and Mr. Mordaunt of Mordaunt Court, poor gentleman—though he is poor no more," and Mr. Brown proceeded to enumerate the long list of his customers.

Now, we have stated that Wolfe, though he had never known the rank of Mordaunt, was acquainted with his real

name; and, as the sound caught his ear, he muttered, "Mordaunt—Mordaunt—ay, but not my former acquaintance—not him who was called Glendower. No, no—the man cannot mean him."

"Yes, sir, but I do mean him," cried Brown, in a rage. "I do mean that Mr. Glendower, who afterwards took another name, but whose real appellation is Mr. Algernon Mordaunt of Mordaunt Court, in this county, sir."

"What description of man is he?" said Wolfe; "rather tall, slender, with an air and mien like a king's, I was going to say—but better than a king's—like a free man's?"

"Ay, ay,—the same," answered Mr. Brown, sullenly; "but why should I tell you? 'Cheating and imposition,' indeed—I am sure my word can be of no avail to you—and I sha'n't stay here any longer to be insulted, Mr. Wolfe—which, I am sure, talking of freemen, no freeman ought to submit to; but as the late Lady Waddilove once very wisely said to me, 'Brown, never have anything do with those republicans—they are the worst tyrants of all.' Good morning, Mr. Wolfe—gentlemen, your servant—'cheating and imposition,' indeed!"—and Mr. Brown banged the door as he departed.

"Wolfe," said Mr. Christopher Culpepper, "who is that man?"

"I know not," answered the republican, laconically, and gazing on the ground apparently in thought.

"He has the air of a slave," quoth the free Culpepper, "and slaves cannot bear the company of freemen; therefore he did right to go—whe—w! Had we a proper, and thorough, and efficient reform, human nature would not be thus debased by trades, and callings, and barters, and exchange, for all professions are injurious to the character and the dignity of man—whe—w! but, as I shall prove upon the hustings to-morrow, it is in vain to hope for any amendment in the wretched state of things until the people of these realms are fully, freely, and fairly represented—whe—w! Gentlemen, it is past two, and we have not or-

dered dinner—whe—w!" (N.B.—This ejaculation denotes the kind of snuffle which lent peculiar energy to the dicta of Mr. Culpepper.)

"Ring the bell, then, and summon the landlord," said, very pertinently, one of the three disputants upon the character of Wilkes.

The landlord appeared; dinner was ordered.

"Pray," said Wolfe, "has that man, Mr. Brown, I think he called himself, left the inn?"

"He has, sir, for he was mightily offended at something which—"

"And," interrupted Wolfe, "how far hence does Mr. Mordaunt live?"

"About five miles on the other side of W——," answered mine host..

Wolfe rose, seized his hat, and was about to depart.

"Stay, stay," cried citizen Christopher Culpepper; "you will not leave us till after dinner?"

"I shall dine at W——," answered Wolfe, quitting the room.

"Then our reckoning will be heavier," said Culpepper. "It is not handsome in Wolfe to leave us—whe—w! Really I think that our brother in the great cause has of late relaxed in his attentions and zeal to the goddess of our devotions—whe—w!"

"It is human nature!" cried one of the three disputants upon the character of Wilkes.

"It is not human nature!" cried the second disputant, folding his arms doggedly, in preparation for a discussion.

"Contemptible human nature!" exclaimed the third disputant, soliloquising with a supercilious expression of hateful disdain.

"Poor human nature!" murmured Castleton, looking upward with a sigh; and though we have not given to that gentleman other words than these, we think they are almost sufficient to let our readers into his character.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

Silvis, ubi passim
Palantes error certo de tramite pellit,
Ille sinistrorsum hic dextrorum abit; unus utrique
Error, sed variis illudit partibus.[1]—HORAT.

As Wolfe strode away from the inn, he muttered to himself—

"Can it be that Mordaunt has suddenly grown rich? If so, I rejoice at it. True, that he was not for our cause, but he had the spirit and the heart which belonged to it. Had he not been bred among the prejudices of birth, or had he lived in stormier times, he might have been the foremost champion of freedom. As it is, I rather lament than condemn. Yet I would fain see him once more. Perhaps prosperity may have altered his philosophy. But can he, indeed, be the same Mordaunt of whom that trading itinerant spoke? Can he have risen to the pernicious eminence of a landed aristocrat? Well, it is worth the journey; for if he have power in the neighbourhood, I am certain that he will exert it for our protection; and at the worst, I shall escape from the idle words of my compatriots. Oh! if it were possible that the advocates could debase the glory of the cause, how long since should I have flinched from the hardship and the service to which my life is devoted! Self-interest, Envy, that snarls at all above it, without even the beast's courage to bite—Folly, that knows not the substance of Freedom, but loves the glitter of its name—Fear, that falters—Crime, that seeks in licentiousness an excuse—Disappointment, only craving occasion to rail—Hatred—Sourness, boasting of zeal, but only venting the blackness of rancour and evil passion—all these make our adherents,

[1] Wandering in those woods where error evermore forces life's stragglers from the beaten path—this one deflects to the left—his fellow chooses the exact contrary. The fault is all the same in each, but it excuses itself by a thousand different reasons.

and give our foes the handle and the privilege to scorn and to despise. But man chooses the object and Fate only furnishes the tools. Happy for our posterity, that when the object is once gained, the frailty of the tools will be no more!"

Thus soliloquising, the republican walked rapidly onwards, till a turn of the road brought before his eye the form of Mr. Brown, seated upon a little rough pony, and "whistling as he went for want of thought."

Wolfe quickened his pace, and soon overtook him.

"You must forgive me, my good man," said he, soothingly; "I meant not to impeach your honesty or your calling. Perhaps I was hasty and peevish; and, in sad earnest, I have much to tease and distract me."

"Well, sir, well," answered Mr. Brown, greatly mollified; "I am sure no Christian can be more forgiving than I am; and, since you are sorry for what you were pleased to say, let us think no more about it. But touching the umbrella, Mr. Wolfe—have you a mind for that interesting and useful relic of the late Lady Waddilove?"

"Not at present, I thank you," said Wolfe, mildly; "I care little for the inclemencies of the heavens, and you may find many to whom your proffered defence from them may be more acceptable. But tell me if the Mr. Mordaunt you mentioned was ever residing in town, and in very indifferent circumstances?"

"Probably he was," said the cautious Brown, who, as we before said, had been bribed into silence, and who now grievously repented that passion had betrayed him into the imprudence of candour; "but I really do not busy myself about other people's affairs. 'Brown,' said the late Lady Waddilove to me—'Brown, you are a good creature, and never talk of what does not concern you.' Those, Mr. Wolfe, were her Ladyship's own words."

"As you please," said the reformer, who did not want shrewdness, and saw that his point was already sufficiently gained; "as you please. And now, to change the subject,

I suppose we shall have your attendance at the meeting at W—— to-morrow?"

"Ay," replied the worthy Brown; "I thought it likely I should meet many of my old customers in the town on such a busy occasion; so I went a little out of my way home to London, in order to spend a night or two there. Indeed, I have some valuable articles for Mr. Glumford, the magistrate, who will be in attendance to-morrow."

"They say," observed Wolfe, "that the magistrates, against all law, right, and custom, will dare to interfere with, and resist, the meeting. Think you report says true?"

"Nay," returned Brown, prudently, "I cannot exactly pretend to decide the question: all I know is that Squire Glumford said to me, at his own house, five days ago, as he was drawing on his boots—'Brown,' said he, 'Brown, mark my words, we shall do for those rebellious dogs!'"

"Did he say so?" muttered Wolfe between his teeth. "Oh, for the old times, or those yet to come, when our answer would have been, or shall be—the sword!"

"And you know," pursued Mr. Brown, "that Lord Ulswater and his regiment are in town, and have even made great preparations against the meeting a week ago."

"I *have* heard this," said Wolfe; "but I cannot think that any body of armed men dare interrupt or attack a convocation of peaceable subjects, met solely to petition parliament against famine for themselves and slavery for their children."

"Famine!" quoth Mr. Brown. "Indeed it is very true—very!—times are dreadfully bad. I can scarcely get my own living—parliament certainly ought to do something; but you must forgive me, Mr. Wolfe: it may be dangerous to talk with you on these matters; and, now I think of it, the sooner I get to W—— the better—good morning—a shower's coming on. You won't have the umbrella, then?"

"They dare not," said Wolfe to himself, "no, no,—they dare not attack us—they dare not;" and clenching his fist,

he pursued, with a quicker step, and a more erect mien, his solitary way.

When he was about the distance of three miles from W—— he was overtaken by a middle-aged man, of a frank air and a respectable appearance. "Good day, sir," said he; "we seem to be journeying the same way—will it be against your wishes to join company?"

Wolfe assented, and the stranger resumed:

"I suppose, sir, you intend to be present at the meeting at W—— to-morrow? There will be an immense concourse, and the entrance of a new detachment of soldiers, and the various reports of the likelihood of their interference with the assembly, make it an object of some interest and anxiety to look forward to."

"True—true," said Wolfe, slowly, eying his new acquaintance with a deliberate and scrutinising attention. "It will, indeed, be interesting to see how far an evil and hardy government will venture to encroach upon the rights of the people, which it ruins while it pretends to rule."

"Of a truth," rejoined the other, "I rejoice that I am no politician. I believe my spirit is as free as any cooped in the narrow dungeon of earth's clay can well be; yet I confess that it has drawn none of its liberty from book, pamphlet, speech, or newspaper, of modern times."

"So much the worse for you, sir," said Wolfe, sourly: "the man who has health and education can find no excuse for supineness or indifference to that form of legislation by which his country decays or prospers."

"Why," said the other, gaily, "I willingly confess myself less of a patriot than a philosopher; and as long as I am harmless, I strive very little to be useful, in a public capacity; in a private one, as a father, a husband, and a neighbour, I trust I am not utterly without my value."

"Pish!" cried Wolfe; "let no man who forgets his public duties prate of his private merits. I tell you, man, that he who can advance by a single hairsbreadth the happiness or the freedom of mankind has done more to save

his own soul than if he had paced every step of the narrow circle of his domestic life with the regularity of clockwork."

"You may be right," quoth the stranger, carelessly; "but I look on things in the mass, and perhaps see only the superficies, while you, I perceive already, are a lover of the abstract. For my part, Harry Fielding's two definitions seem to me excellent. 'Patriot—a candidate for a place!' 'Politics—the art of getting such a place!' Perhaps, sir, as you seem a man of education, you remember the words of our great novelist."

"No!" answered Wolfe, a little contemptuously—"I cannot say that I burthen my memory with the deleterious witticisms and shallow remarks of writers of fancy. It has been a mighty and spreading evil to the world, that the vain fictions of the poets, or the exaggerations of novelists have been hitherto so welcomed and extolled. Better had it been for us if the destruction of the lettered wealth at Alexandria had included all the lighter works which have floated, from their very levity, down the stream of time, an example and a corruption to the degraded geniuses of later days."

The eyes of the stranger sparkled. "Why, you outgoth the Goth!" exclaimed he, sharply. "But you surely preach against what you have not studied. Confess that you are but slightly acquainted with Shakespeare, and Spenser, and noble Dan Chaucer. Ay, if you knew them as well as I do, you would, like me, give

> 'To hem faith and full credènce,
> And in your heart have hem in reverènce.'"

"Pish!" again muttered Wolfe; and then rejoined aloud, "It grieves me to see time so wasted, and judgment so perverted, as yours appears to have been; but it fills me with pity and surprise, as well as grief, to find that, so far from shame at the effeminacy of your studies, you appear to glory and exult in them."

"May the Lord help me, and lighten thee," said Cole—

for it was he. "You are at least not a novelty in human wisdom, whatever you may be in character; for you are far from the only one proud of being ignorant, and pitying those who are not so."

Wolfe darted one of his looks of fire at the speaker, who, nothing abashed, met the glance with an eye, if not as fiery, at least as bold.

"I see," said the republican, "that we shall not agree upon the topics you have started. If you still intrude your society upon me, you will, at least, choose some other subject of conversation."

"Pardon me," said Cole, whose very studies, while they had excited, in their self-defence, his momentary warmth, made him habitually courteous and urbane—"pardon me for my hastiness of expression. I own myself in fault." And, with this apology, our ex-king slid into the new topics which the scenery and the weather afforded him.

Wolfe, bent upon the object of his present mission, made some inquiries respecting Mordaunt; and though Cole only shared the uncertain information of the country gossips as to the past history of that person, yet the little he did know was sufficient to confirm the republican in his belief of Algernon's identity; while the ex-gipsy's account of his rank and reputation in the country made Wolfe doubly anxious to secure, if possible, his good offices and interference on behalf of the meeting. But the conversation was not always restricted to neutral and indifferent ground, but, ever and anon, wandered into various allusions or opinions, from the one, certain to beget retort or controversy in the other.

Had we time, and our reader patience, it would have been a rare and fine contrast to have noted more at large the differences of thought and opinion between the companions; each in his several way so ardent for liberty, and so impatient of the control and customs of society; each so enthusiastic for the same object, yet so coldly contemptuous to the enthusiasm of the other. The one guided only by his poetical and erratic tastes, the other solely by dreams,

seeming to the world no less baseless, yet, to his own mind, bearing the name of stern judgment and inflexible truth. Both men of active and adventurous spirits, to whom forms were fetters, and ceremonies odious; yet, deriving from that mutual similiarity only pity for mutual perversion, they were memorable instances of the great differences congeniality itself will occasion, and of the never-ending varieties which minds, rather under the influence of imagination than judgment, will create.

CHAPTER LXXV.

Gratis anhelans, multa agendo, nihil agens.[1]—PHÆDRUS.

UPON entering the town, the streets displayed all the bustle and excitement which the approaching meeting was eminently calculated to create in a place ordinarily quiescent and undisturbed; groups of men were scattered in different parts, conversing with great eagerness; while here and there some Demosthenes of the town, impatient of the coming strife, was haranguing his little knot of admiring friends, and preparing his oratorical organs by petty skirmishing for the grand battle of the morrow. Now and then the eye roved upon the gaunt forms of Lord Ulswater's troopers, as they strolled idly along the streets, in pairs, perfectly uninterested by the great event which set all the more peaceable inmates of the town in a ferment, and returning, with a slighting and supercilious glance, the angry looks and muttered anathemas which, ever and anon, the hardier spirits of the petitioning party liberally bestowed upon them.

As Wolfe and his comrade entered the main street, the former was accosted by some one of his compatriots, who, seizing him by the arm, was about to apprise the neighbour-

[1] Panting and labouring in vain; doing much,—effecting nothing.

ing idlers, by a sudden exclamation, of the welcome entrance of the eloquent and noted republican. But Wolfe perceived, and thwarted his design.

"Hush!" said he, in a low voice; "I am only now on my way to an old friend, who seems a man of influence in these parts, and may be of avail to us on the morrow; keep silence, therefore, with regard to my coming till I return. I would not have my errand interrupted."

"As you will," said the brother spirit: "but whom have you here—a fellow-labourer?" and the reformer pointed to Cole, who, with an expression of shrewd humour, blended with a sort of philosophical compassion, stood at a little distance waiting for Wolfe, and eying the motley groups assembled before him.

"No," answered Wolfe; "he is some vain and idle sower of unprofitable flowers; a thing who loves poetry, and, for aught I know, writes it; but that reminds me that I must rid myself of his company; yet stay—do you know this neighbourhood sufficiently to serve me as a guide?"

"Ay," quoth the other; "I was born within three miles of the town."

"Indeed!" rejoined Wolfe; "then perhaps you can tell me if there is any way of reaching a place called Mordaunt Court, without passing through the more public and crowded thoroughfares."

"To be sure," rejoined the brother spirit; "you have only to turn to the right up yon hill, and you will in an instant be out of the purlieus and precincts of W——, and on your shortest road to Mordaunt Court; but surely it is not to its owner that you are bound?"

"And why not?" said Wolfe.

"Because," replied the other, "he is the wealthiest, the highest, and, as report says, the haughtiest aristocrat of these parts."

"So much the better then," said Wolfe, "can he aid us in obtaining a quiet hearing to-morrow, undisturbed by those liveried varlets of hire, who are termed, in sooth,

Britain's defence! Much better, when we think of all they cost us to pamper and to clothe, should they be termed Britain's ruin; but, farewell for the present; we shall meet to-night; your lodgings——?"

"Yonder," said the other, pointing to a small inn opposite; and Wolfe, nodding his adieu, returned to Cole, whose vivacious and restless nature had already made him impatient of his companion's delay.

"I must take my leave of you now," said Wolfe, "which I do with a hearty exhortation that you will change your studies, fit only for effeminate and enslaved minds."

"And I return the exhortation," answered Cole. "Your studies seem to me tenfold more crippling than mine: mine take all this earth's restraints from me, and yours seem only to remind you that all earth *is* restraint: mine show me whatever worlds the fondest fancy could desire; yours only the follies and chains of this. In short, while 'my mind to me a *kingdom* is,' yours seems to consider the whole universe itself nothing but a great meeting for the purpose of abusing ministers and demanding reform!"

Not too well pleased by this answer, and at the same time indisposed to the delay of further reply, Wolfe contented himself with an iron sneer of disdain, and, turning on his heel, strode rapidly away in the direction his friend had indicated.

Meanwhile, Cole followed him with his eye, till he was out of sight, and then muttered to himself—"Never was there a fitter addition to old Barclay's 'Ship of Fools!' I should not wonder if this man's patriotism leads him from despising the legislature into breaking the law; and, faith, the surest way to the gallows is less through vice than discontent; yet I would fain hope better things for him—for, methinks, he is neither a common declaimer nor an ordinary man."

With these words the honest Cole turned away, and, strolling towards the Golden Fleece, soon found himself in the hospitable mansion of Mistress and Mister Merrylack.

While the ex-king was taking his ease at his inn, Wolfe proceeded to Mordaunt Court. The result of the meeting that there ensued was a determination on the part of Algernon to repair immediately to W——.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

The commons here in Kent are up in arms.
Second Part of Henry VI.

When Mordaunt arrived at W——, he found that the provincial deities (who were all assembled at dinner with the principal inhabitants of the town), in whose hands the fate of the meeting was placed, were in great doubt and grievous consternation. He came in time, first to balance the votes, and ultimately to decide them. His mind, prudent and acute, when turned to worldly affairs, saw at a glance the harmless, though noisy, nature of the meeting; and he felt that the worst course the government or the county could pursue would be to raise into importance, by violence, what otherwise would meet with ridicule from most, and indifference from the rest.

His large estates, his ancient name, his high reputation for talent, joined to that manner, half eloquent and half commanding, which rarely fails of effect when deliberation only requires a straw on either side to become decision—all these rendered his interference of immediate avail; and it was settled that the meeting should, as similar assemblies had done before, proceed and conclude, undisturbed by the higher powers, so long as no positive act of sedition to the government or danger to the town was committed.

Scarcely was this arrangement agreed upon, before Lord Ulswater, who had hitherto been absent, entered the room in which the magisterial conclave was assembled. Mr. Glumford (whom our readers will possibly remember as the

suitor to Isabel St. Leger, and who had at first opposed, and then reluctantly subscribed to, Mordaunt's interference) bustled up to him.

"So, so, my lord," said he, "since I had the honour of seeing your lordship, quite a new sort of trump has been turned up."

"I do not comprehend your metaphorical elegances of speech, Mr. Glumford," said Lord Ulswater.

Mr. Glumford explained. Lord Ulswater's cheek grew scarlet. "So Mr. Mordaunt has effected this wise alteration," said he.

"Nobody else, my lord, nobody else; and I am sure, though your lordship's estates are at the other end of the county, yet they are much larger than his; and since your lordship has a troop at your command, and that sort of thing, I would not, if I were your lordship, suffer any such opposition to your wishes."

Without making a reply to this harangue, Lord Ulswater stalked haughtily up to Mordaunt, who was leaning against the wainscot, and conversing with those around him.

"I cannot but conceive, Mr. Mordaunt," said he, with a formal bow, "that I have been misinformed in the intelligence I have just received."

"Lord Ulswater will, perhaps, inform me to what intelligence he alludes."

"That Mr. Mordaunt, the representative of one of the noblest families in England, has given the encouragement and influence of his name and rank to the designs of a seditious and turbulent mob."

Mordaunt smiled slightly, as he replied—"Your lordship *rightly* believes that you are misinformed. It is precisely because I would *not* have the mob you speak of seditious or turbulent, that I have made it my request that the meeting of to-morrow should be suffered to pass off undisturbed."

"Then, sir," cried Lord Ulswater, striking the table with a violence which caused three reverend potentates of the province to start back in dismay, "I cannot but con-

sider such interference on your part to the last degree impolitic and uncalled for; these, sir, are times of great danger to the state, and in which it is indispensably requisite to support and strengthen the authority of the law."

"I waive, at present," answered Mordaunt, "all reply to language neither courteous nor appropriate. I doubt not but that the magistrates will decide as is most in accordance with the spirit of that law which, in this, and in all times, should be supported."

"Sir," said Lord Ulswater, losing his temper more and more, as he observed that the bystanders, whom he had been accustomed to awe, all visibly inclined to the opinion of Mordaunt, "sir, if your name has been instrumental in producing so unfortunate a determination on the part of the magistrates, I shall hold you responsible to the government for those results which ordinary prudence may calculate upon."

"When Lord Ulswater," said Mordaunt, sternly, "has learned what is due not only to the courtesies of society, but to those legitimate authorities of his country, who (he ventures to suppose) are to be influenced contrary to their sense of duty, by any individual, then he may, perhaps, find leisure to make himself better acquainted with the nature of those laws which he now so vehemently upholds."

"Mr. Mordaunt, you will consider yourself answerable to me for those words," said Lord Ulswater, with a tone of voice unnaturally calm; and the angry flush of his countenance gave place to a livid paleness. Then, turning on his heel, he left the room.

As he repaired homeward, he saw one of his soldiers engaged in a loud and angry contest with a man in the plain garb of a peaceful citizen; a third person, standing by, appeared ineffectually endeavouring to pacify the disputants. A rigid disciplinarian, Lord Ulswater allowed not even party feeling, roused as it was, to conquer professional habits. He called off the soldier, and the man with whom the latter had been engaged immediately came up

to Lord Ulswater, with a step as haughty as his own. The third person, who had attempted the peacemaker, followed him.

"I presume, sir," said he, "that you are an officer of this man's regiment."

"I am the commanding officer, sir," said Lord Ulswater, very little relishing the air and tone of the person who addressed him.

"Then," answered the man (who was, indeed, no other than Wolfe, who, having returned to W—— with Mordaunt, had already succeeded in embroiling himself in a dispute) —"then, sir, I look to you for his punishment and my redress;" and Wolfe proceeded, in his own exaggerated language to detail a very reasonable cause of complaint. The fact was, that Wolfe, meeting one of his compatriots, and conversing with him somewhat loudly, had uttered some words which attracted the spleen of the soldier, who was reeling home, very comfortably intoxicated; and the soldier had, most assuredly, indulged in a copious abuse of the d—d rebel, who could not walk the streets without chattering sedition.

Wolfe's friend confirmed the statement.

The trooper attempted to justify himself; but Lord Ulswater saw his intoxication in an instant, and, secretly vexed that the complaint was not on the other side, ordered the soldier to his quarters, with a brief but sure threat of punishment on the morrow. Not willing, however, to part with the "d—d rebel," on terms so flattering to the latter, Lord Ulswater, turning to Wolfe, with a severe and angry air, said—

"As for you, fellow, I believe the whole fault was on your side; and if you dare again give vent to your disaffected ravings, I shall have you sent to prison, to tame your rank blood upon bread and water. Begone, and think yourself fortunate to escape now!"

The fierce spirit of Wolfe was in arms on the instant—and his reply, in subjecting him to Lord Ulswater's

threat, might at least have prevented him enlightening the public on the morrow, had not his friend, a peaceable, prudent man, seized him by the arm, and whispered—"What are you about? Consider for what you are here—another word may rob the assembly of your presence. A man bent on a public cause must not, on the eve of its trial, enlist in a private quarrel."

"True my friend, true," said Wolfe, swallowing his rage, and eying Lord Ulswater's retreating figure with a menacing look; "but the time may yet come when I shall have license to retaliate on the upstart."

"So be it," quoth the other—"he is our bitterest enemy. You know, perhaps, that he is Lord Ulswater of the —— regiment? It has been at his instigation that the magistrates proposed to disturb the meeting. He has been known publicly to say that all who attended the assembly ought to be given up to the swords of his troopers."

"The butchering dastard—to dream even of attacking unarmed men; but enough of him—I must tarry yet in the street to hear what success our intercessor has obtained." And as Wolfe passed the house in which the magisterial conclave sat, Mordaunt came out and accosted him.

"You have sworn to me that your purpose is peaceable," said Mordaunt.

"Unquestionably," answered Wolfe.

"And you will pledge yourself that no disturbance, that can either be effected, or counteracted, by yourself and friends, shall take place?"

"I will."

"Enough!" answered Mordaunt. "Remember, that if you commit the least act that can be thought dangerous, I may not be able to preserve you from the military. As it is, your meeting will be unopposed."

Contrary to Lord Ulswater's prediction, the meeting went off as quietly as an elderly maiden's tea party. The speakers, even Wolfe, not only took especial pains to recommend order and peace, but avoided, for the most part,

all inflammatory enlargement upon the grievances of which they complained. And the sage foreboders of evil, who had locked up their silver spoons, and shaken their heads very wisely for the last week, had the agreeable mortification of observing rather an appearance of good humour upon the countenances of the multitude than that ferocious determination against the lives and limbs of the well-affected which they had so sorrowfully anticipated.

As Mordaunt (who had been present during the whole time of the meeting) mounted his horse, and quitted the ground, Lord Ulswater, having just left his quarters, where he had been all day in expectation of some violent act of the orators or the mob demanding his military services, caught sight of him, with a sudden recollection of his own passionate threat. There had been nothing in Mordaunt's words which would, in our times, have justified a challenge; but in that day duels were fought upon the slightest provocation. Lord Ulswater therefore rode up at once to a gentleman with whom he had some intimate acquaintance, and briefly saying that he had been insulted both as an officer and gentleman, by Mr. Mordaunt, requested his friend to call upon that gentleman, and demand satisfaction.

"To-morrow," said Lord Ulswater, "I have the misfortune to be unavoidably engaged. The next day you can appoint place and time of meeting."

"I must first see the gentleman to whom Mr. Mordaunt may refer me," said the friend prudently; "and perhaps your honour may be satisfied without any hostile meeting at all."

"I think not," said Lord Ulswater, carelessly, as he rode away; "Mr. Mordaunt is a gentleman, and gentlemen never apologise."

Wolfe was standing unobserved near Lord Ulswater while the latter thus instructed his proposed second. "Man of blood," muttered the republican; "with hom-

icide thy code of honour, and massacre thine interpretation of law, by violence wouldst thou rule, and by violence mayst thou perish!"

CHAPTER LXXVII.

Jam te premet nox, fabulæque Manes,
Et domus exilis Plutonia.[1]—Hor.

The morning was dull and heavy, as Lord Ulswater mounted his horse, and, unattended, took his way towards Westborough Park. His manner was unusually thoughtful and absent; perhaps two affairs upon his hands, either of which seemed likely to end in bloodshed, were sufficient to bring reflection even to the mind of a cavalry officer.

He had scarcely got out of the town before he was overtaken by our worthy friend Mr. Glumford. As he had been a firm ally of Lord Ulswater in the contest respecting the meeting, so, when he joined and saluted that nobleman, Lord Ulswater, mindful of past services, returned his greeting with an air rather of condescension than *hauteur*. To say truth, his lordship was never very fond of utter loneliness, and the respectful bearing of Glumford, joined to that mutual congeniality which sympathy in political views always occasions, made him more pleased with the society than shocked with the intrusion of the squire; so that when Glumford said, "If your lordship's way lies along this road for the next five or six miles, perhaps you will allow me the honour of accompanying you." Lord Ulswater graciously signified his consent to the proposal, and carelessly mentioning that he was going to Westborough Park, slid into that conversation with his new companion which the meeting and its actors afforded.

[1] This very hour Death shall overcome thee, and the fabled Manes, and the shadowy Plutonian realms receive thee.

Turn we for an instant to Clarence. At the appointed hour he had arrived at Westborough Park, and, bidding his companion, the trusty Wardour, remain within the chaise which had conveyed them, he was ushered, with a trembling heart, but a mien erect and self-composed, into Lady Westborough's presence; the marchioness was alone.

"I am sensible, sir," said she, with a little embarrassment, "that it is not exactly becoming to my station and circumstances, to suffer a meeting of the present nature between Lord Ulswater and yourself to be held within this house; but I could not resist the request of Lord Ulswater, conscious, from his character, that it could contain nothing detrimental to the—to the consideration and delicacy due to Lady Flora Ardenne."

Clarence bowed. "So far as I am concerned," said he, "I feel confident that Lady Westborough will not repent of her condescension."

There was a pause.

"It is singular," said Lady Westborough, looking to the clock upon an opposite table, "that Lord Ulswater has not yet arrived."

"It is," said Clarence, scarcely conscious of his words, and wondering whether Lady Flora would deign to appear.

Another pause. Lady Westborough felt the awkwardness of her situation.

Clarence made an effort to recover himself.

"I do not see," said he, "the necessity of delaying the explanation I have to offer to your ladyship till my Lord Ulswater deems it suitable to appear. Allow me at once to enter upon a history, told in few words, and easily proved."

"Stay," said Lady Westborough, struggling with her curiosity; "it is due to one who has stood in so peculiar a situation in our family to wait yet a little longer for his coming. We will, therefore, till the hour is completed, postpone the object of our meeting."

Clarence again bowed, and was silent. Another and a

longer pause ensued; it was broken by the sound of the clock striking—the hour was completed.

"Now,"—began Clarence—when he was interrupted by a sudden and violent commotion in the hall. Above all was heard a loud and piercing cry, in which Clarence recognised the voice of the old steward. He rose abruptly, and stood motionless and aghast: his eyes met those of Lady Westborough, who, pale and agitated, lost for the moment all her habitual self-command. The sound increased: Clarence rushed from the room into the hall; the open door of the apartment revealed to Lady Westborough, as to him, a sight which allowed her no farther time for hesitation. She hurried after Clarence into the hall, gave one look, uttered one shriek of horror, and fainted.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

Iden.—But thou wilt brave me in these saucy terms.
Cade.—Brave thee! ay, by the best blood that ever was broached, and beard thee, too.—SHAKSPEARE.

"You see, my lord," said Mr. Glumford to Lord Ulswater, as they rode slowly on, "that as long as those rebellious scoundrels are indulged in their spoutings and meetings, and that sort of thing, that—that there will be no bearing them."

"Very judiciously remarked, sir," replied Lord Ulswater, "I wish all gentlemen of birth and consideration viewed the question in the same calm, dispassionate, and profound light that you do. Would to Heaven it were left to me to clear the country of those mutinous and dangerous rascals—I would make speedy and sure work of it."

"I am certain you would, my lord—I am certain you would. It is a thousand pities that pompous fellow, Mordaunt, interfered yesterday, with his moderation, and policy, and all that sort of thing—so foolish, you know, my

lord,—mere theory and romance, and that sort of thing: we should have had it all our own way, if he had not."

Lord Ulswater played with his riding-whip, but did not reply. Mr. Glumford continued:

"Pray my lord, did your lordship see what an ugly ill-dressed set of dogs those *meetingers* were—that Wolfe, above all? Oh, he's a horrid-looking fellow. By the by, he left the town this very morning; I saw him take leave of his friends in the street just before I set out. He is going to some other meeting—on foot, too. Only think of the folly of talking about the policy, and prudence, and humanity, and that sort of thing of sparing such a pitiful poor fellow as that—can't afford a chaise, or a stage-coach even, my lord—positively can't."

"You see the matter exactly in its true light, Mr. Glumford," said his lordship, patting his fine horse, which was somewhat impatient of the slow pace of its companion.

"A very beautiful animal of your lordship's," said Mr. Glumford spurring his own horse—a heavy, dull quadruped with an obstinate ill-set tail, a low shoulder, and a Roman nose. "I am very partial to horses myself, and love a fine horse as well as anybody." Lord Ulswater cast a glance at his companion's steed, and seeing nothing in its qualities to justify this assertion of attachment to fine horses, was silent; Lord Ulswater never flattered even his mistress, much less Mr. Glumford.

"I will tell you, my lord," continued Mr. Glumford, "what a bargain this horse was;" and the squire proceeded, much to Lord Ulswater's discontent, to retail the history of his craft in making the said bargain.

The riders were now entering a part of the road, a little more than two miles from Westborough Park, in which the features of the neighbouring country took a bolder and ruder aspect than they had hitherto worn. On one side of the road, the view opened upon a descent of considerable depth, and the dull sun looked drearily over a valley in which large fallow fields, a distant and solitary spire, and a

few stunted and withering trees, formed the chief characteristics. On the other side of the road a narrow footpath was separated from the highway by occasional posts; and on this path Lord Ulswater—(how the minute and daily occurrences of life show the grand pervading principles of character)—was, at the time we refer to, riding, in preference to the established thoroughfare for equestrian and aurigal travellers. The side of this path farthest from the road was bordered by a steep declivity of stony and gravelly earth, which almost deserved the dignified appellation of a precipice; and it was with no small exertion of dexterous horsemanship that Lord Ulswater kept his spirited and susceptible steed upon the narrow and somewhat perilous path, in spite of its frequent starts at the rugged descent below.

"I think, my lord, if I may venture to say so," said Mr. Glumford, having just finished the narration of his bargain, "that it would be better for you to take the high road just at present; for the descent from the footpath is steep and abrupt, and deuced crumbling! so that if your lordship's horse shied or took a wrong step, it might be attended with unpleasant consequences—a fall, or that sort of thing."

"You are very good, sir," said Lord Ulswater, who, like most proud people, conceived advice an insult; "but I imagine myself capable of guiding my horse, at least upon a road so excellent as this."

"Certainly, my lord, certainly; I beg your pardon: but —bless me, who is that tall fellow in black, talking to himself yonder, my lord? The turn of the road hides him from *you* just at present; but I see him well. Ha! ha! what gestures he uses! I dare say he is one of the petitioners, and—yes, my lord, by Jupiter, it is Wolfe himself! You had better (excuse me, my lord) come down from the footpath—it is not wide enough for two people—and—Wolfe, I dare say, a d—d rascal, would not get out of the way for the devil himself! He's a nasty, black,

fierce-looking fellow; I would not for something meet him in a dark night, or that sort of thing!"

"I do not exactly understand, Mr. Glumford," returned Lord Ulswater, with a supercilious glance at that gentleman, "what peculiarities of temper you are pleased to impute to me, or from what you deduce the supposition that I shall move out of my way for a person like Mr. Woolt, or Wolfe, or whatever be his name."

"I beg your pardon, my lord, I am sure," answered Glumford; "of course your lordship knows best, and if the rogue is impertinent, why, I'm a magistrate, and will commit him; though, to be sure," continued our righteous Daniel, in a lower key, "he has a right to walk upon the footpath without being ridden over, or that sort of thing."

The equestrians were now very near Wolfe, who turning hastily round, perceived, and immediately recognised Lord Ulswater—"Ah-ha," muttered he to himself, "here comes the insolent thirster for blood, grudging *us* seemingly even the meagre comfort of the path which his horse's hoofs are breaking up—yet, thank Heaven," added the republican, looking with a stern satisfaction at the narrowness of the footing, "he cannot very well pass me, and the free lion does not move out of his way for such pampered kine as those to which this creature belongs."

Actuated by this thought, Wolfe almost insensibly moved entirely into the middle of the path, so that with the posts on one side, and the abrupt and undefended precipice, if we may so call it, on the other, it was quite impossible for any horseman to pass the republican, unless over his body.

Lord Ulswater marked the motion, and did not want penetration to perceive the cause. Glad of an opportunity to wreak some portion of his irritation against a member of a body so offensive to his mind, and which had the day before obtained a sort of triumph over his exertions against them: and rendered obstinate in his intention by the pique

he had felt at Glumford's caution, Lord Ulswater, tightening his rein, and humming, with apparent indifference, a popular tune, continued his progress till he was within a foot of the republican. Then, checking his horse for a moment, he called, in a tone of quiet arrogance to Wolfe to withdraw himself on one side till he had passed.

The fierce blood of the republican, which the least breath of oppression sufficed to kindle, and which yet boiled with the remembrance of Lord Ulswater's threat to him two nights before, was on fire at this command. He stopped short, and turning half round, stood erect in the strength and power of his singularly tall and not ungraceful form. "Poor and proud fool," said he, with a voice of the most biting scorn, and fixing an eye eloquent of ire and menaced danger upon the calmly contemptuous countenance of the patrician—"poor and proud fool, do you think that your privileges have already reached so pleasant a pitch that you may ride over men like dust? Off, fool—the basest peasant in England, degraded as he is, would resist, while he ridiculed your arrogance."

Without deigning any reply, Lord Ulswater spurred his horse; the spirited animal bounded forward, almost on the very person of the obstructor of the path; with uncommon agility Wolfe drew aside from the danger, seized, with a powerful grasp, the bridle, and abruptly arresting the horse, backed it fearfully towards the descent. Enraged beyond all presence of mind, the fated nobleman, raising his whip, struck violently at the republican. The latter, as he felt the blow, uttered a single shout of such ferocity that it curdled the timorous blood of Glumford, and with a giant and iron hand he backed the horse several paces down the precipice. The treacherous earth crumbled beneath the weight, and Lord Ulswater, spurring his steed violently at the same instant that Wolfe so sharply and strongly curbed it, the affrighted animal reared violently, forced the rein from Wolfe, stood erect for a moment of horror to the spectator, and then, as its footing and balance alike failed,

it fell backward, and rolled over and over its unfortunate and helpless rider.

"Good Heavens!" cried Glumford, who had sat quietly upon his dozing horse, watching the result of the dispute —"what have you done? you have killed his lordship—positively killed him—and his horse, too, I dare say. You shall be hanged for this, sir, as sure as I am a magistrate, and that sort of thing."

Unheeding this denunciation, Wolfe had made to the spot where rider and horse lay blent together at the foot of the descent; and assisting the latter to rise, bent down to examine the real effect of his violence. "Methinks," said he, as he looked upon the hueless, but still defying, features of the horseman—"methinks I have seen that face years before—but where? Perhaps my dreams have foretold me this."

Lord Ulswater was utterly senseless; and as Wolfe raised him, he saw that the right side of the head was covered with blood, and that one arm seemed crushed and broken. Meanwhile a carriage had appeared—was hailed by Glumford—stopped; and on being informed of the circumstance, and the rank of the sufferer, the traveller, a single gentleman, descended, assisted to raise the unhappy nobleman—placed him in the carriage, and, obeying Glumford's instructions, proceeded slowly to Westborough Park.

"But the ruffian—the rebel—the murderer!" said Mr. Glumford, both querulously and inquiringly, looking towards Wolfe, who, without having attempted to assist his victim, stood aloof, with arms folded, and an expression of sated ferocity upon his speaking features.

"Oh! as to him," quoth the traveller, stepping into his carriage, in order to support the mangled man—"you, sir, and my valet can bring him along with you, or take him to the next town, or do, in short, with him just as you please, only be sure he does not escape—drive on, postboy, very gently." And poor Mr. Glumford found the muscular

form of the stern Wolfe consigned to the sole care of himself and a very diminutive man in pea-green silk stockings, who, however excellently well he might perform the office of valet, was certainly by no means calculated in physical powers for the detention of a criminal.

Wolfe saved the pair a world of trouble and anxiety.

"Sir," said he, gravely turning to Glumford, "you beheld the affray, and whatever its consequences, will do me the common justice of witnessing as to the fact of the first aggressor. It will, however, be satisfactory to both of us to seize the earliest opportunity of putting the matter upon a legal footing, and I shall, therefore, return to W——, to which town you will doubtless accompany me."

"With all my heart!" cried Mr. Glumford, feeling as if a mountain of responsibility were taken from his breast. "And I wish to Heaven you may be transported instead of hanged."

CHAPTER LXXIX.

But gasping heaved the breath that Lara drew,
And dull the film along his dim eye grew.—Byron.

The light broke partially through the half-closed shutters of the room in which lay Lord Ulswater—who, awakened to sense and pain by the motion of the carriage, had now relapsed into insensibility. By the side of the sofa, on which he was laid, knelt Clarence, bathing one hand with tears violent and fast; on the opposite side leant over, with bald front, and an expression of mingled fear and sorrow upon his intent countenance, the old steward; while, at a little distance, Lord Westborough, who had been wheeled into the room, sat mute in his chair, aghast with bewilderment and horror, and counting every moment to the arrival of the surgeon, who had been sent for. The stranger to whom the carriage belonged stood by the window, detail-

ing, in a low voice, to the chaplain of the house, what particulars of the occurrence he was acquainted with, while the youngest scion of the family, a boy of about ten years, and who, in the general confusion, had thrust himself unnoticed into the room, stood close to the pair, with open mouth and thirsting ears, and a face on which childish interest at a fearful tale was strongly bent with the more absorbed feeling of terror at the truth.

Slowly Lord Ulswater opened his eyes—they rested upon Clarence.

"My brother—my brother!" cried Clarence, in a voice of powerful anguish—"is it thus—thus that you have come hither to—" He stopped in the gushing fulness of his heart. Extricating from Clarence the only hand he was able to use, Lord Ulswater raised it to his brow, as if in the effort to clear remembrance; and then, turning to Wardour, seemed to ask the truth of Clarence's claim,—at least so the old man interpreted the meaning of his eye, and the faint and scarce intelligible words which broke from his lips.

"It is—it is, my honoured lord," cried he, struggling with his emotion—"it is your brother—your lost brother, Clinton L'Estrange." And as he said these words, Clarence felt the damp chill hand of his brother press his own, and knew by that pressure and the smile—kind, though brief from exceeding pain—with which the ill-fated nobleman looked upon him, that the claim long unknown was at last acknowledged, and the ties long broken united, though in death.

The surgeon arrived—the room was cleared of all but Clarence—the first examination was sufficient. Unaware of Clarence's close relationship to the sufferer, the surgeon took him aside—"A very painful operation," said he, "might be performed, but it would only torture, in vain, the last moments of the patient; no human skill can save, or even protract his life."

The doomed man, who, though in great pain, was still

sensible, stirred. His brother flew towards him. "Flora," he murmured, "let me see *her*, I implore."

Curbing, as much as he was able, his emotion, and conquering his reluctance to leave the sufferer even for a moment, Clarence flew in search of Lady Flora. He found her: in rapid and hasty words, he signified the wish of the dying man, and hurried her, confused, trembling, and scarce conscious of the melancholy scene she was about to witness, to the side of her affianced bridegroom.

I have been by the death-beds of many men, and I have noted that shortly before death, as the frame grows weaker and weaker, the fiercer passions yield to those feelings better harmonising with the awfulness of the hour. Thoughts soft and tender, which seemed little to belong to the character in the health and vigour of former years, obtain then an empire, brief, indeed, but utter for the time they last—and this is the more impressive because (as in the present instance I shall have occasion to portray) in the moments which succeed and make *the very* latest of life, the ruling passion, suppressed for an interval by such gentler feelings, sometimes again returns to take its final triumph over that frail clay, which, through existence, it has swayed, agitated and moulded like wax unto its will.

When Lord Ulswater saw Flora approach and bend weepingly over him, a momentary softness stole over his face. Taking her hand he extended it towards Clarence, and turning to the latter faltered out—"Let this—my—brother—atone—for——;" apparently unable to finish the sentence, he then relaxed his hold and sank upon the pillow; and so still, so apparently breathless did he remain for several minutes, that they thought the latest agony was over.

As, yielding to this impression, Clarence was about to withdraw the scarce conscious Flora from the chamber, words, less tremulous and indistinct than aught which he had yet uttered, broke from Lord Ulswater's lips. Clarence hastened to him; and bending over his countenance

saw that even through the rapid changes and shades of death, it darkened with the peculiar characteristics of the unreleased soul within:—the brow was knit into more than its wonted sternness and pride; and in the eye which glared upon the opposite wall, the light of the waning life broke into a momentary blaze—that flash, so rapid and evanescent, before the air drinks in the last spark of the being it has animated, and night—the starless and eternal—falls over the extinguished lamp! The hand of the right arm (which was that unshattered by the fall) was clenched and raised; but, when the words which came upon Clarence's ear had ceased, it fell heavily by his side, like a clod of that clay which it had then become. In those words it seemed as if, in the confused delirium of passing existence, the brave soldier mingled some dim and bewildered recollection of former battles, with that of his last most fatal, though most ignoble strife.

"Down, down with them!" he muttered between his teeth, though in a tone startlingly deep and audible; "down with them! No quarter to the infidels—strike for England and Effingham. Ha!—who strives for flight there!—kill him—no mercy, I say—none!—there—there—I have despatched him—ha!—ha! What, still alive?—off, slave, off! Oh, slain—slain in a ditch, by a base-born hind—oh—bitter—bitter—bitter!" And with these words, of which the last, from their piercing anguish and keen despair, made a dread contrast with the fire and defiance of the first, the jaw fell—the flashing and fierce eye glazed and set—and all of the haughty and bold patrician which the earth retained was—dust!

CHAPTER LXXX.

Il n'est jamais permis de détériorer une âme humaine pour l'avantage des autres, ni de faire un scélérat pour le service des honnêtes gens.[1]—ROUSSEAU.

As the reader approaches the termination of this narrative, and looks back upon the many scenes he has passed, perhaps, in the mimic representation of human life, he may find no unfaithful resemblance to the true.

As, amongst the crowd of characters jostled against each other in their course, some drop off at the first, the second, or the third stage, and leave a few only continuing to the last, while Fate chooses her agents and survivors among those whom the bystander, perchance, least noticed as the objects of her selection—and they who, haply, seemed to him, at first, among the most conspicuous as characters, sink, some abruptly, some gradually, into actors of the least importance in events; as the reader notes the same passion, in different strata, producing the most opposite qualities, and gathers from that notice some estimate of the vast perplexity in the code of morals, deemed by the shallow so plain a science; when he finds that a similar and single feeling will produce both the virtue we love and the vice we detest, the magnanimity we admire and the meanness we despise; as the feeble hands of the author force into contrast ignorance and wisdom, the affectation of philosophy and its true essence, coarseness and refinement, the lowest vulgarity of sentiment with an exaltation of feeling approaching to morbidity, the reality of virtue with the counterfeit, the glory of the Divinity with the hideousness of the Idol, sorrow and eager joy, marriage and death, tears and their young successors, smiles; as all, blent together,

[1] It is not permitted us to degrade one single soul for the sake of conferring advantage on others, nor to make a rogue for the good of the honest.

these varieties of life form a single yet many-coloured web, leaving us to doubt whether, in fortune the bright hue or the dark—in character the base material or the rich, predominate—the workman of the web could almost reconcile himself to his glaring and great deficiency in art, by the fond persuasion that he has, at least in his choice of tint and texture, caught something of the likeness of Nature: but he knows, to the abasement of his vanity, that these enumerated particulars of resemblance to life are common to all, even to the most unskilful of his brethren; and it is not the mere act of copying a true original, but the rare circumstance of force and accuracy in the copy, which can alone constitute a just pretension to merit, or flatter the artist with the hope of a moderate success.

The news of Lord Ulswater's untimely death soon spread around the neighbourhood, and was conveyed to Mordaunt by the very gentleman whom that nobleman had charged with his hostile message. Algernon repaired at once to W——, to gather from Wolfe some less exaggerated account of the affray than that which the many tongues of Rumour had brought to him.

It was no difficult matter to see the precise share of blame to be attached to Wolfe; and, notwithstanding the biased account of Glumford, and the strong spirit of party then existing in the country, no rational man could, for a moment, term the event of a sudden fray a premeditated murder, or the violence of the aggrieved the black offence of a wilful criminal. Wolfe, therefore, soon obtained a release from the confinement to which he had been first committed; and, with a temper still more exasperated by the evident disposition of his auditors to have treated him, had it been possible, with the utmost rigour, he returned to companions well calculated, by their converse and bent of mind, to inflame the fester of his moral constitution.

It happens, generally, that men very vehement in any particular opinion choose their friends, not for a general similarity of character, but in proportion to their mutual

congeniality of sentiment upon that particular opinion; it happens, also, that those most *audibly* violent, if we may so speak, upon *any* opinion, moral or political, are rarely the wisest or the purest of their party. Those with whom Wolfe was intimate, were men who shared none of the nobler characteristics of the republican; still less did they participate, or even comprehend, the enlightened and benevolent views for which the wise and great men of that sect —a sect to which all philanthropy is, perhaps too fondly, inclined to lean—have been so conspicuously eminent. On the contrary, Wolfe's comrades, without education, and consequently without principle, had been driven to disaffection, by desperate fortunes and ruined reputations acting upon minds polluted by the ignorance, and hardened among the dross of the populace. But the worst can, by constant intercourse, corrupt the best; and the barriers of good and evil, often confused in Wolfe's mind by the blindness of his passions, seemed, as his intercourse with these lawless and ruffian associates thickened, to be at last utterly broken down and swept away.

Unhappily too—soon after Wolfe's return to London—the popular irritation showed itself in mobs, perhaps rather to be termed disorderly than seditious. The ministers, however, thought otherwise; the military were summoned, and much injury, resulting, it is to be hoped, from accident, not design, ensued to many of the persons assembled. Some were severely wounded by the swords of the soldiers —others maimed and trampled upon by the horses, which shared the agitation or irritability of their riders; and a few, among whom were two women and three children, lost their lives. Wolfe had been one of the crowd—and the scene, melancholy as it really was, and appearing to his temper unredeemed and inexcusable on the part of the soldiers—left on his mind a deep and burning impression of revenge. Justice (as they termed it) was demanded by strong bodies of the people upon the soldiers; but the administration deeming it politic rather to awe than to concili-

ate, so far from censuring the military, approved their exertions.

From that time Wolfe appears to have resolved upon the execution of a design which he had long imperfectly and confusedly meditated.

This was no less a crime (and to him did conscientiously seem no less a virtue) than to seize a favourable opportunity for assassinating the most prominent member of the administration, and the one who, above all the rest, was the most odious to the disaffected. It must be urged, in extenuation of the atrocity of this design, that a man perpetually brooding over one scheme, which to him has become the very sustenance of existence, and which scheme, perpetually frustrated, grows desperate by disappointment, acquires a heat of morbid and oblique enthusiasm, which may not be unreasonably termed insanity; and that, at the very time Wolfe, reconciled it to his conscience to commit the murder of his fellow creature, he would have moved out of his path for a worm. Assassination, indeed, seemed to him justice; and a felon's execution the glory of martyrdom. And yet, O Fanatic, thou didst anathematise the Duellist as the Man of blood—what is the Assassin?

CHAPTER LXXXI.

And thou that, silent at my knee,
Dost lift to mine thy soft, dark, earnest eyes,
Fill'd with the love of childhood, which I see
Pure through its depths—a thing without disguise.
Thou that hast breathed in slumber on my breast,
When I have checked its throbs to give thee rest,
Mine own, whose young thoughts fresh before me rise,
Is it not much that I may guide thy prayer,
And circle thy young soul with free and healthful air.

—HEMANS.

THE events we have recorded, from the time of Clarence's visit to Mordaunt to the death of Lord Ulswater, took place within little more than a week. We have now to pass in

silence over several weeks; and as it was the commencement of autumn when we introduced Clarence and Mordaunt to our reader, so it is the first opening of winter in which we will resume the thread of our narration.

Mordaunt had removed to London; and, although he had not yet taken any share in public business, he was only watching the opportunity to commence a career, the brilliancy of which, those who knew aught of his mind, began already to foretell. But he mixed little, if at all, with the gayer occupants of the world's prominent places. Absorbed alternately in his studies and his labours of good, the halls of pleasure were seldom visited by his presence; and they who, in the crowd, knew nothing of him but his name, and the lofty bearing of his mien, recoiled from the coldness of his exterior; and, while they marvelled at his retirement and reserve, saw in both but the moroseness of the student and the gloom of the misanthropist.

But the nobleness of his person—the antiquity of his birth—his wealth, his unblemished character, and the interest thrown over his name, by the reputation of talent, and the unpenetrated mystery of his life, all powerfully spoke in his favour to those of the gentler sex, who judge us not only from what we are to others, but from what they imagine we can be to them. From such allurements, however, as from all else, the mourner turned only the more deeply to cherish the memory of the dead; and it was a touching and holy sight to mark the mingled excess of melancholy and fondness with which he watched over that treasure in whose young beauty and guileless heart his departed Isabel had yet left the resemblance of her features and her love. There seemed between them to exist even a dearer and closer tie than that of daughter and sire; for, in both, the objects which usually divide the affections of the man or the child had but a feeble charm: Isabel's mind had expanded beyond her years, and Algernon's had outgrown his time; so that neither the sports natural to her age, nor the ambition ordinary to his,

were sufficient to wean or to distract the unity of their love. When, after absence, his well-known step trod lightly in the hall, her ear, which had listened, and longed, and thirsted for the sound, taught her fairy feet to be the first to welcome his return; and when the slightest breath of sickness menaced her slender frame, it was his hand that smoothed her pillow, and his smile that cheered away her pain; and when she sank into sleep, she knew that a father's heart watched over her through the long but untiring night;—that a father's eye would be the first which, on waking, she would meet.

"Oh! beautiful, and rare as beautiful," was that affection; in the parent no earthlier or harder sternness in authority, nor weakness in doting, nor caprice in love—in the child no fear debasing reverence, yet no familiarity diminishing respect. But Love, whose pride is in serving, seemed to make at once soft and hallowed the offices mutually rendered—and Nature, never counteracted in her dictates, wrought, without a visible effort, the proper channels into which those offices should flow; and that Charity, which not only covers sins, but lifts the veil from virtues, whose beauty might otherwise have lain concealed, linked them closer and closer, and threw over that link the sanctity of itself. For it was Algernon's sweetest pleasure to make her young hands the ministers of good to others, and to drink, at such times, from the rich glow of her angel countenance, the purified selfishness of his reward. And when after the divine joy of *blessing*, which, perhaps, the youngest taste yet more vividly than their sires, she threw her arms around his neck and thanked him with glad tears for the luxury he had bestowed upon her, how could they, in that gushing overflow of heart, help loving each other the more, or feeling, that in that love there was something which justified the excess?

Nor have we drawn with too exaggerating a pencil, nor, though Isabel's *mind* was older than her years, extended that prematureness to her *heart*. For, where we set the

example of benevolence, and see that the example is in nought corrupted, the milk of human kindness will flow not the less readily from the youngest breast, and out of the mouths of babes will come the wisdom of charity and love!

Ever since Mordaunt's arrival in town, he had sought out Wolfe's abode, for the purpose of ministering to the poverty under which he rightly conjectured that the republican laboured. But the habitation of one, needy, distressed, seldom living long in one place, and far less notorious of late than he had formerly been, was not easy to discover; nor was it till after long and vain search that he ascertained the retreat of his singular acquaintance. The day in which he effected this object we shall have hereafter occasion to specify. Meanwhile we return to Mr. Crauford.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

> Plot on thy little hour, and skein on skein
> Weave the vain mesh, in which thy subtle soul
> Broods on its venom! Lo! behind, before,
> Around thee, like an armament of cloud,
> The black Fate labours onward.—ANON.

THE dusk of a winter's evening gathered over a room in Crauford's house in town, only relieved from the closing darkness by an expiring and sullen fire, beside which Mr. Bradley sat, with his feet upon the fender, apparently striving to coax some warmth into the icy palms of his spread hands. Crauford himself was walking up and down the room with a changeful step, and ever and anon glancing his bright, shrewd eye at the partner of his fraud, who, seemingly unconscious of the observation he underwent, appeared to occupy his attention solely with the difficulty of warming his meagre and withered frame.

"Ar'n't you very cold there, sir?" said Bradley, after a

long pause, and pushing himself farther into the verge of the dying embers—"may I not ring for some more coals?"

"Hell and the ——: I beg your pardon, my good Bradley, but you vex me beyond patience: how can you think of such trifles when our very lives are in so imminent a danger?"

"I beg your pardon, my honoured benefactor, they are indeed in danger!"

"Bradley, we have but one hope—fidelity to each other. If we persist in the same story, not a tittle can be brought home to us;—not a tittle, my good Bradley; and though our characters may be a little touched, why, what is a character? Shall we eat less, drink less, enjoy less, when we have lost it? Not a whit. No, my friend, we will go abroad: leave it to me to save from the wreck of our fortunes enough to live upon like princes."

"If not like *peers*, my honoured benefactor."

"'Sdeath!—yes, yes, very good—he! he! he! if not peers. Well, all happiness is in the senses, and Richard Crauford has as many senses as Viscount Innisdale; but had we been able to protract inquiry another week, Bradley, why, I would have been my Lord, and you, Sir John."

"You bear your losses like a hero, sir," said Mr. Bradley.

"To be sure; there *is* no loss, man, but life—none; let us preserve that—and it will be our own fault if we don't—and the devil take all the rest. But, bless me, it grows late, and, at all events, we are safe for some hours; the inquiry won't take place till twelve to-morrow, why should we not feast till twelve to-night? Ring, my good fellow, dinner must be nearly ready."

"Why, honoured sir," said Bradley, "I want to go home to see my wife, and arrange my house. Who knows but I may sleep in Newgate to-morrow?"

Crauford, who had been still walking to and fro, stopped abruptly at this speech; and his eye, even through the gloom, shot out a livid and fierce light, before which the

timid and humble glance of Mr. Bradley quailed in an instant.

"Go home!—no, my friend, no, I can't part with you to-night, no, not for an instant. I have many lessons to give you. How are we to learn our parts for to-morrow, if we don't rehearse them beforehand? Do you not know that a single blunder may turn what I hope will be a farce into a tragedy? Go home!—pooh, pooh—why, man, I have not seen *my* wife, nor put *my* house to rights, and if you do but listen to me, I tell you again and again that not a hair of our heads can be touched."

"You know best, honoured sir; I bow to your decision."

"Bravo, honest Brad! and now for dinner. I have the most glorious champagne that ever danced in foam to your lip. No counsellor like the bottle, believe me!"

And the servant entering to announce dinner, Crauford took Bradley's arm and leaning affectionately upon it, passed through an obsequious and liveried row of domestics to a room blazing with light and plate. A noble fire was the first thing which revived Bradley's spirit, and, as he spready his hands over it before he sat down to the table, he surveyed, with a gleam of gladness upon his thin cheeks, two vases of glittering metal formerly the boast of a king, in which were immersed the sparkling genii of the grape.

Crauford, always a *gourmand*, ate with unusual appetite, and pressed the wine upon Bradley with an eager hospitality, which soon somewhat clouded the senses of the worthy man. The dinner was removed, the servants retired, and the friends were left alone.

"A pleasant trip to France!" cried Crauford, filling a bumper. "That's the land for hearts like ours. I tell you what, little Brad, we will leave our wives behind us, and take, with a new country, and new names, a new lease of life. What will it signify to men making love at Paris what fools say of them in London? Another bumper, honest Brad—a bumper to the girls! What say you to that, eh?"

"Lord, sir, you are so facetious—so witty! It must be owned that a black eye is a great temptation—Lira-lira, la-la!" And Mr. Bradley's own eyes rolled joyously.

"Bravo, Brad!—a song, a song! but treason to King Burgundy! Your glass is—"

"Empty, honoured sir, I know it!—Lira-lira la!—but it is easily filled! We who have all our lives been pouring from one vessel into another, know how to keep it up to the last!

"Courage then, cries the knight, we may yet be forgiven,
Or at worst buy the bishop's reversion in heaven;
Our frequent escapes in this world show how true 'tis,
That gold is the only *Elixir Salutis.*
Derry down, Derry down.

"All you, who to swindling conveniently creep,
Ne'er piddle—by thousands the treasury sweep,
Your safety depends on the weight of the sum,
For no rope was yet made that could tie up a plum.
Derry down, &c."[1]

"Bravissimo, little Brad!—you are quite a wit! See what it is to have one's faculties called out. Come, a toast to old England, the land in which no man ever wants a farthing who has wit to steal it—'Old England for ever!'—your rogue is your only true patriot!"—and Crauford poured the remainder of the bottle, nearly three parts full, into a beaker, which he pushed to Bradley. That convivial gentleman emptied it at a draught, and, faltering out, "Honest Sir John!—room for my Lady Bradley's carriage," dropped down on the floor insensible.

Crauford rose instantly, satisfied himself that the intoxication was genuine, and, giving the lifeless body a kick of contemptuous disgust, left the room, muttering,—"The dull ass, did he think it was on his back that I was going to ride off? He!—he!—he! But stay, let me feel my pulse. Too fast by twenty strokes! One's never sure of

[1] From a ballad called "The Knight and the Prelate."

the mind if one does not regulate the body to a hair! Drank too much—must take a powder before I start."

Mounting by a back staircase to his bedroom, Crauford unlocked a chest, took out a bundle of clerical clothes, a large shovel hat, and a huge wig. Hastily, but not carelessly, induing himself in these articles of disguise, he then proceeded to stain his fair cheeks with a preparation which soon gave them a swarthy hue. Putting his own clothes in the chest, which he carefully locked (placing the key in his pocket), he next took from a desk on his dressing-table a purse; opening this, he extracted a diamond of great size and immense value, which, years before, in preparation of the event that had now taken place, he had purchased.

His usual sneer curled his lip as he gazed at it. "Now," said he, "is it not strange that this little stone should supply the mighty wants of that grasping thing, man? Who talks of religion, country, wife, children? This petty mineral can purchase them all! Oh, what a bright joy speaks out in your white cheek, my beauty! What are all human charms to yours? Why, by your spell, most magical of talismans, my years may walk, gloating and revelling, through a lane of beauties, till they fall into the grave! Pish!—that grave is an ugly thought—a very, very ugly thought! But come, my sun of hope, I must eclipse you for a while! Type of myself—while you hide, I hide also; and when I once more let you forth to the day *then* shine out Richard Crauford—shine out!" So saying, he sewed the diamond carefully in the folds of his shirt; and rearranging his dress, took the cooling powder, which he weighed out to a grain, with a scrupulous and untrembling hand—descended the back stairs—opened the door, and found himself in the open street.

The clock struck ten as he entered a hackney-coach and drove to another part of London. "What, so late!" thought he; "I must be at Dover in twelve hours—the vessel sails then. Humph!—some danger yet! What a

pity that I could not trust that fool! He!—he!—he!—what will he think to-morrow, when he wakes and finds that only *one* is destined to swing!"

The hackney-coach stopped, according to his direction, at an inn in the city. Here Crauford asked if a note had been left for Dr. Stapylton. One (written by himself) was given to him.

"Merciful Heaven!" cried the false doctor, as he read it, "my daughter is on a bed of death!"

The landlord's look wore anxiety—the doctor seemed for a moment paralysed by silent woe. He recovered, shook his head piteously, and ordered a post-chaise and four on to Canterbury without delay.

"It is an ill wind that blows nobody good!" thought the landlord, as he issued the order into the yard.

The chaise was soon out—the doctor entered—off went the post-boys—and Richard Crauford, feeling his diamond, turned his thoughts to safety and to France.

A little, unknown man, who had been sitting at the bar for the last two hours, sipping brandy and water, and who, from his extreme taciturnity and quiet, had been scarcely observed, now rose. "Landlord," said he, "do you know who that gentleman is?"

"Why," quoth Boniface, "the letter to him was directed, 'For the Rev. Dr. Stapylton—will be called for.'"

"Ah," said the little man, yawning—"I shall have a long night's work of it. Have you another chaise and four in the yard?"

"To be sure, sir, to be sure!" cried the landlord in astonishment.

"Out with it, then! Another glass of brandy and water—a little stronger—no sugar!"

The landlord stared—the barmaid stared—even the head waiter, a very stately person, stared too.

"Hark ye," said the little man, sipping his brandy and water, "I am a deuced good-natured fellow, so I'll make you a great man to-night; for nothing makes a man so great

as being let into a great secret. Did you ever hear of the rich Mr. Crauford!"

"Certainly—who has not?"

"Did you ever see him?"

"No! I can't say I ever did."

"You lie, landlord—you saw him to-night."

"Sir!" cried the landlord, bristling up.

The little man pulled out a brace of pistols, and very quietly began priming them out of a small powder-flask.

The landlord started back—the head-waiter cried "rape!" and the barmaid "murder!"

Who the devil are you, sir?" cried the landlord.

"Mr. Tickletrout, the celebrated officer—thief-taker, as they call it. Have a care, ma'am, the pistols are loaded. I see the chaise is out—there's the reckoning, landlord."

"O Lord! I'm sure I don't want any reckoning—too great an honour for my poor house to be favoured with your company; but (following the little man to the door) whom did you please to say you were going to catch?"

"Mr. Crauford, *alias* Dr. Stapylton."

"Lord! Lord!—to think of it—how shocking! What has he done?"

"Swindled, I believe."

"My eyes! And why, sir, did not you catch him when he was in the bar?"

"Because then I should not have got paid for my journey to Dover. Shut the door, boy; first stage on to Canterbury."

And, drawing a woollen nightcap over his ears, Mr. Tickletrout resigned himself to his nocturnal excursion.

On the very day on which the patent for his peerage was to have been made out—on the very day on which he had afterwards calculated on reaching Paris—on that very day was Mr. Richard Crauford lodged in Newgate, fully committed for a trial of life and death.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

There, if, O gentle love! I read aright
The utterance that sealed thy sacred bond:
'Twas listening to those accents of delight
She hid upon his breast those eyes—beyond
Expression's power to paint—all languishingly fond.
—CAMPBELL.

"AND you will positively leave us for London," said Lady Flora, tenderly—"and to-morrow, too!" This was said to one who, under the name of Clarence Linden, has played the principal part in our drama, and who now, by the death of his brother, succeeding to the honours of his house, we present to our reader as Clinton L'Estrange, Earl of Ulswater.

They were alone in the memorable pavilion; and though it was winter, the sun shone cheerily into the apartment; and through the door, which was left partly open, the evergreens, contrasting with the leafless boughs of the oak and beech, could be just descried, furnishing the lover with some meet simile of love, and deceiving the eyes of those willing to be deceived with a resemblance to the departed summer. The unusual mildness of the day seemed to operate genially upon the birds—those children of light and song; and they grouped blithely beneath the window and round the door, where the hand of the kind young spirit of the place had so often ministered to their wants. Every now and then, too, you might hear the shrill glad note of the blackbird keeping measure to his swift and low flight, and sometimes a vagrant hare from the neighbouring preserves sauntered fearlessly by the half-shut door, secure, from long experience, of an asylum in the vicinity of one who had drawn from the breast of Nature a tenderness and love for all its offspring.

Her lover sat at Flora's feet; and, looking upward, seemed to seek out the fond and melting eyes which, too

conscious of their secret, turned bashfully from his gaze. He had drawn her arm over his shoulder; and clasping that small and snowy hand, which, long coveted with a miser's desire, was at length won, he pressed upon it a thousand kisses—sweeter beguilers of time than even words. All had been long explained—the space between their hearts annihilated—doubt, anxiety, misconstruction, those clouds of love, had passed away, and left not a wreck to obscure its heaven.

"And you will leave us to-morrow—must it be to-morrow?"

"Ah! Flora, it must; but see, I have your lock of hair—your beautiful, dark hair, to kiss, when I am away from you, and I shall have your letters, dearest—a letter every day; and oh! more than all, I shall have the hope, the certainty, that when we meet again, you will be mine forever."

"And I, too, must, by seeing it in your handwriting, learn to reconcile myself to your new name. Ah! I wish you had been still Clarence—only Clarence. Wealth, rank, power—what are all these but rivals to poor Flora?"

Lady Flora sighed, and the next moment blushed; and, what with the sigh and the blush, Clarence's lips wandered from the hands to the cheek, and thence to a mouth on which the west wind seemed to have left the sweets of a thousand summers.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

A Houndsditch man, one of the devil's near kinsmen—a broker.—*Every Man in His Humour.*

We have here discovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

It was an evening of mingled rain and wind, the hour about nine, when Mr. Morris Brown, under the shelter of that admirable umbrella of sea-green silk, to which we have

before had the honour to summon the attention of our readers, was after a day of business, plodding homeward his weary way. The obscure streets through which his course was bent were at no time very thickly thronged, and at the present hour the inclemency of the night rendered them utterly deserted. It is true that now and then a solitary female, holding up, with one hand, garments already piteously bedraggled, and with the other thrusting her umbrella in the very teeth of the hostile winds, might be seen crossing the intersected streets, and vanishing amid the subterranean recesses of some kitchen area, or tramping onward amidst the mazes of the metropolitan labyrinth, till, like the cuckoo, "heard," but no longer "seen," the echo of her retreating pattens made a dying music to the reluctant ear; or indeed, at intervals of unfrequent occurrence, a hackney vehicle jolted, rumbling, bumping over the uneven stones, as if groaning forth its gratitude to the elements for which it was indebted for its fare. Sometimes also a chivalrous gallant of the feline species ventured its delicate paws upon the streaming pavement, and shook, with a small but dismal cry, the rain-drops from the pyramidal roofs of its tender ears.

But, save these occasional infringements on its empire, solitude, dark, comfortless, and unrelieved, fell around the creaking footsteps of Mr. Morris Brown. "I wish," soliloquised the worthy broker, "that I had been able advantageously to dispose of this cursed umbrella of the late Lady Waddilove; it is very little calculated for any but a single lady of slender shape, and though it certainly keeps the rain off my hat, it only sends it with a double dripping upon my shoulders. Pish, deuce take the umbrella! I shall catch my death of cold."

These complaints of an affliction that was assuredly sufficient to irritate the naturally sweet temper of Mr. Brown, only ceased, as that industrious personage paused at the corner of the street, for the purpose of selecting the driest path through which to effect the miserable act of

crossing to the opposite side. Occupied in stretching his neck over the kennel, in order to take the fullest survey of its topography which the scanty and agitated lamps would allow, the unhappy wanderer, lowering his umbrella, suffered a cross and violent gust of wind to rush, as if on purpose, against the interior. The rapidity with which this was done, and the sudden impetus, which gave to the inflated silk the force of a balloon, happening to occur exactly at the moment Mr. Brown was stooping with such wistful anxiety over the pavement, that gentleman, to his inexpressible dismay, was absolutely lifted, as it were, from his present footing, and immersed in a running rivulet of liquid mire, which flowed immediately below the pavement. Nor was this all—for the wind, finding itself somewhat imprisoned in the narrow receptacle it had thus abruptly entered, made so strenuous an exertion to extricate itself, that it turned Lady Waddilove's memorable relic utterly inside out; so that when Mr. Brown, aghast at the calamity of his immersion, lifted his eyes to heaven, with a devotion that had in it more of expostulation than submission, he beheld, by the melancholy lamps, the apparition of his umbrella, the exact opposite to its legitimate conformation, and seeming, with its lengthy stick, and inverted summit, the actual and absolute resemblance of a gigantic wine-glass.

"Now," said Mr. Brown, with that ironical bitterness so common to intense despair, "now, that's what I call pleasant."

As if the elements were guided and set on by all the departed souls of those whom Mr. Brown had, at any time, overreached in his profession, scarcely had the afflicted broker uttered this brief sentence, before a discharge of rain, tenfold more heavy than any which had yet fallen, tumbled down in literal torrents upon the defenceless head of the itinerant.

"This won't do," said Mr. Brown, plucking up courage, and splashing out of the little rivulet, once more into *terra*

firma, "this won't do—I must find a shelter somewhere. Dear, dear, how the wet runs down me! I am for all the world like the famous dripping well in Derbyshire. What a beast of an umbrella! I'll never buy one again of an old lady—hang me if I do."

As the miserable Morris uttered these sentences, which gushed out, one by one, in a broken stream of complaint, he looked round and round—before—behind—beside—for some temporary protection or retreat. In vain—the uncertainty of the light only allowed him to discover houses, in which no portico extended its friendly shelter, and where even the doors seemed divested of the narrow ledge wherewith they are, in more civilised quarters, ordinarily crowned.

"I shall certainly have the rheumatism all this winter," said Mr. Brown, hurrying onward as fast as he was able. Just then, glancing desperately down a narrow lane, which crossed his path, he perceived the scaffolding of a house, in which repair or alteration had been at work. A ray of hope flashed across him; he redoubled his speed, and entering the welcome haven, found himself entirely protected from the storm. The extent of the scaffolding was, indeed, rather considerable; and, though the extreme narrowness of the lane, and the increasing gloom of the night, left Mr. Brown in almost total darkness, so that he could not perceive the exact peculiarities of his situation, yet he was perfectly satisfied with the shelter he had obtained; and after shaking the rain from his hat—squeezing his coat sleeves and lappets, satisfying himself that it was only about the shoulders that he was thoroughly wetted, and thrusting two pocket-handkerchiefs between his shirt and his skin, as preventives to the dreaded rheumatism, Mr. Brown leant luxuriously back against the wall in the farthest corner of his retreat, and busied himself with endeavouring to restore his insulted umbrella to its original utility of shape.

Our wanderer had been about three minutes in this situ-

ation, when he heard the voices of two men, who were hastening along the lane.

"But do stop," said one; and these were the first words distinctly audible to the ear of Mr. Brown—"do stop, the rain can't last much longer, and we have a long way yet to go."

"No, no," said the other, in a voice more imperious than the first, which was evidently plebeian, and somewhat foreign in its tone, "no, we have no time. What signify the inclemencies of weather to men feeding upon an inward and burning thought, and made, by the workings of the mind, almost callous to the contigencies of the frame?"

"Nay, my very good friend," said the first speaker with positive, though not disrespectful, earnestness, "that may be all very fine for you, who have a constitution like a horse; but I am quite a—what call you it—an invalid—eh! and have a devilish cough ever since I have been in this d—d country—beg your pardon, no offence to it—so I shall just step under cover of this scaffolding for a few minutes, and if you like the rain so much, my very good friend, why, there is plenty of room in the lane to—(ugh—ugh—ugh) to enjoy it."

As the speaker ended, the dim light, just faintly glimmering at the entrance of the friendly shelter, was obscured by his shadow, and, presently afterwards, his companion joining him, said—

"Well, if it must be so; but how can you be fit to brave all the perils of our scheme, when you shrink, like a palsied crone, from the sprinkling of a few water-drops?"

"A few water-*drops*, my very good friend," answered the other, "a few—what call you them—ay—water-*falls* rather—(ugh—ugh); but let me tell you, my brother citizen, that a man may not like to get his skin wet with water, and would yet thrust his arm up to the very elbow in blood!—(ugh—ugh)."

"The devil!" mentally ejaculated Mr. Brown, who at the word "scheme," had advanced one step from his re-

treat, but who now, at the last words of the intruder, drew back as gently as a snail into his shell; and although his person was far too much enveloped in shade to run the least chance of detection, yet the honest broker began to feel a little tremour vibrate along the chords of his thrilling frame, and a new anathema against the fatal umbrella rise to his lips.

"Ah!" quoth the second, "I trust that it may be so; but to return to our project—are you quite sure that these two identical ministers are in the *regular* habit of *walking* homeward from that parliament which their despotism has so degraded?"

"Sure—ay, that I am; Davidson swears to it!"

"And you are also sure of their persons, so that, even in the dusk, you can recognise them? for you know, I have never seen them."

"Sure as fivepence!" returned the first speaker, to whose minds the lives of the persons referred to were of considerably less value than the sum elegantly specified in his metaphorical reply.

"Then," said the other, with a deep, stern determination of tone—"then shall this hand, by which one of the proudest of our oppressors has already fallen, be made a still worthier instrument of the wrath of Heaven!"

"You are a d—d pretty shot, I believe," quoth the first speaker, as indifferently as if he were praising the address of a Norfolk squire.

"Never did my eye misguide me, or my aim swerve a hairsbreadth from its target! I thought once, when I learnt the art as a boy, that in battle, rather than in the execution of a single criminal, that skill would avail me."

"Well, we shall have a glorious opportunity to-morrow night!" answered the first speaker; "that is, if it does not rain so infernally as it does this night; but we shall have a watch of many hours, I dare say."

"That matters but little," replied the other conspirator;

"nor even if, night after night, the same vigil is renewed and baffled, so that it bring its reward at last."

"Right," quoth the first; "I long to be at it!—ugh!—ugh! ugh!—what a confounded cough I have! it will be my death soon, I'm thinking."

"If so," said the other, with a solemnity which seemed ludicrously horrible, from the strange contrast of the words and object—"die at least with the sanctity of a brave and noble deed upon your conscience and your name!"

"Ugh! ugh!—I am but a man of colour, but I am a patriot, for all that, my good friend! See, the violence of the rain has ceased; we will proceed;" and with these words the worthy pair left the place to darkness and Mr. Brown.

"O Lord!" said the latter stepping forth, and throwing, as it were, in that exclamation, a whole weight of suffocating emotion from his chest—"what bloody miscreants! Murder his Majesty's ministers!—'shoot them like pigeons!' —'d—d pretty shot!' indeed. O Lord! what *would* the late Lady Waddilove, who always hated even the Whigs so cordially, say, if she were alive? But how providential that I should have been here! Who knows but I may save the lives of the whole administration, and get a pension, or a little place in the post-office? I'll go to the prime minister directly—this very minute! Pish! i'n't you right now, you cursed thing?" upbraiding the umbrella, which, half-right and half-wrong, seemed endued with an instinctive obstinacy for the sole purpose of tormenting its owner.

However, losing this petty affliction in the greatness of his present determination, Mr. Brown issued out of his lair, and hastened to put his benevolent and loyal intentions into effect.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

When laurell'd ruffians die, the Heaven and Earth,
And the deep Air give warning. Shall the good
Perish and not a sign?—ANON.

IT was the evening after the event recorded in our last chapter: all was hushed and dark in the room where Mordaunt sat alone, the low and falling embers burnt dull in the grate, and through the unclosed windows the high stars rode pale and wan in their career. The room, situated at the back of the house, looked over a small garden, where the sickly and hoar shrubs, overshadowed by a few wintry poplars and grim firs, saddened in the dense atmosphere of fog and smoke, which broods over our island city. An air of gloom hung comfortless and chilling over the whole scene externally and within. The room itself was large and old, and its far extremities, mantled as they were with dusk and shadow, impressed upon the mind that involuntary and vague sensation, not altogether unmixed with awe, which the eye, resting upon a view that it can but dimly and confusedly define, so frequently communicates to the heart. There was a strange oppression at Mordaunt's breast with which he in vain endeavoured to contend. Ever and anon, an icy but passing chill, like the shivers of a fever, shot through his veins, and a wild and unearthly and objectless awe stirred through his hair, and his eyes filled with a glassy and cold dew, and sought, as by a self-impulse, the shadowy and unpenetrated places, around, which momently grew darker and darker. Little addicted by his peculiar habits to an over-indulgence of the imagination, and still less accustomed to those absolute conquests of the physical frame over the mental, which seem the usual sources of that feeling we call presentiment, Mordaunt rose, and walking to and fro along the room, endeavoured by the exercise to restore to his veins their wonted and healthful circula-

tion. It was past the hour in which his daughter retired to rest; but he was often accustomed to steal up to her chamber, and watch her in her young slumbers; and he felt this night a more than usual desire to perform that office of love; so he left the room and ascended the stairs. It was a large old house that he tenanted. The staircase was broad, and lighted from above by a glass dome; and as he slowly ascended, and the stars gleamed down still and ghastly upon his steps, he fancied—but he knew not why—that there was an omen in their gleam. He entered the young Isabel's chamber; there was a light burning within; he stole to her bed, and putting aside the curtain, felt, as he looked upon her peaceful and pure beauty, a cheering warmth gather round his heart. How lovely is the sleep of childhood! What worlds of sweet, yet not utterly sweet, associations, does it not mingle with the envy of our gaze! What thoughts, and hopes, and cares, and forebodings does it not excite! There lie in that yet ungrieved and unsullied heart what unnumbered sources of emotion! what deep fountains of passion and woe! Alas! whatever be its earlier triumphs, the victim must fall at last! As the hart which the jackals pursue, the moment its race is begun, the human prey is foredoomed for destruction, not by the *single* sorrow, but the *thousand* cares; it may baffle one race of pursuers, but a new succeeds; as fast as some drop off exhausted, others spring up to renew and to perpetuate the chase; and the fated, though flying victim never escapes—but in death. There was a faint smile upon his daughter's lip, as Mordaunt bent down to kiss it; the dark lash rested on the snowy lid—ah, that tears had no well beneath its surface!—and her breath stole from her rich lips with so regular and calm a motion, that, like the "forest leaves," it "seemed stirred with prayer!"[1] One arm lay over the coverlet, the other pillowed her head, in the unrivalled grace of infancy.

Mordaunt stooped once more, for his heart filled as he

[1] And yet the forest leaves seem stirred with prayer.—BYRON.

gazed upon his child, to kiss her cheek again, and to mingle a blessing with the kiss. When he rose—upon that fair smooth face there was one bright and glistening drop; and Isabel stirred in sleep and, as if suddenly vexed by some painful dream, she sighed deeply as she stirred. It was the last time that the cheek of the young and predestined orphan was ever pressed by a father's kiss, or moistened by a father's tear! He left the room silently; no sooner *had* he left it, than, as if without the precincts of some charmed and preserving circle, the chill and presentiment at his heart returned. There is a feeling which perhaps all have in a momentary hypochondria felt at times; it is a strong and shuddering impression which Coleridge has embodied in his own dark and supernatural verse, *that something not of earth is behind us*—that if we turned our gaze backward we should behold that which would make the heart as a bolt of ice, and the eye shrivel and parch within its socket. And so intense is the fancy that *when* we turn, and all is void, from that very void we could shape a spectre, as fearful as the image our terror had foredrawn! Somewhat such feeling had Mordaunt now, as his steps sounded hollow and echoless on the stairs, and the stars filled the air around him with their shadowy and solemn presence. Breaking by a violent effort from a spell of which he felt that a frame somewhat overtasked of late was the real enchanter, he turned once more into the room which he had left to visit Isabel. He had pledged his personal attendance at an important motion in the House of Commons for that night, and some political papers were left upon his table, which he had promised to give to one of the members of his party. He entered the room, purposing to stay only a minute; an hour passed before he left it: and his servant afterwards observed that, on giving him some orders as he passed through the hall to the carriage, his cheek was as white as marble, and that his step, usually so haughty and firm, reeled and trembled like a fainting man's. Dark and inexplicable Fate! weaver of wild con-

trasts, demon of this hoary and old world, that movest through it, as a spirit moveth over the waters, filling the depths of things with a solemn mystery and an everlasting change! Thou sweepest over our graves, and Joy is born from the ashes: thou sweepest over Joy, and lo, it is a grave! Engine and tool of the Almighty, whose years cannot fade, thou changest the earth as a garment, and as a vesture it is changed; thus makest it one vast sepulchre and womb united, swallowing and creating life! and reproducing, over and over, from age to age, from the birth of creation to the creation's doom, the same dust and atoms *which were* our fathers, and which are the sole heirlooms that through countless generations they bequeath and perpetuate to their sons.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

Methinks, before the issue of our fate,
A spirit moves within us, and impels
The passion of a prophet to our lips.—Anon.

O vitæ philosophia dux, virtutis indagatrix!—Cic.[1]

Upon leaving the House of Commons, Mordaunt was accosted by Lord Ulswater, who had just taken his seat in the Upper House. Whatever abstraction or whatever weakness Mordaunt might have manifested before he had left his home, he had now entirely conquered both; and it was with his usual collected address that he replied to Lord Ulswater's salutations, and congratulated him on his change of name, and accession of honours.

It was a night of uncommon calm and beauty; and, although the moon was not visible, the frosty and clear sky, "clad in the lustre of its thousand stars,"[2] seemed scarcely to mourn either the hallowing light, or the breathing poesy

[1] O Philosophy, conductress of life—searcher after virtue!
[2] Marlow.

of her presence; and, when Lord Ulswater proposed that Mordaunt should dismiss his carriage, and that they should walk home, Algernon consented not unwillingly to the proposal. He felt, indeed, an unwonted relief in companionship; and the still air, and the deep heavens, seemed to woo him from more unwelcome thoughts, as with a softening and a sister's love.

"Let us, before we return home," said Lord Ulswater, "stroll for a few moments, towards the bridge; I love looking at the river on a night like this."

Whoever inquires into human circumstances will be struck to find how invariably a latent current of fatality appears to pervade them. It is the turn of the atom in the scale which makes our safety, or our peril; our glory, or our shame; raises us to the throne or sinks us to the grave. A secret voice of Mordaunt's heart prompted him to dissent from this proposal, trifling as it seemed, and welcome as it was to his present and peculiar mood: he resisted the voice—the moment passed away, and the last seal was set upon his doom—they moved onward towards the bridge. At first both were silent, for Lord Ulswater used the ordinary privilege of a lover and was absent and absorbed, and his companion was never the first to break a taciturnity natural to his habits. At last Lord Ulswater said, "I rejoice that you are now in the sphere of action most likely to display your talents—you have not spoken yet, I think; indeed, there has been no fitting opportunity, but you will soon, I trust."

"I know not," said Mordaunt, with a melancholy smile, "whether you judge rightly in thinking the sphere of political exertion the one most calculated for me; but I feel at my heart a foreboding that my planet is not fated to shine in *any* earthly sphere. Sorrow and misfortune have dimmed it in its birth, and now it is waning towards its decline."

"Its decline!" repeated his companion—"no, rather its meridian. You are in the vigour of your years, the noon of your prosperity, the height of your intellect and knowl-

edge; you require only an effort to add to these blessings the most lasting of all—Fame!"

"Well," said Mordaunt, and a momentary light flashed over his countenance, "the effort *will* be made. I do not pretend not to have felt ambition. No man should make it his boast, for it often gives to our frail and earth-bound virtue both its weapon and its wings; but when the soil is exhausted, its produce fails; and when we have forced our hearts to too great an abundance, whether it be of flowers that perish, or of grain that endures, the seeds of after hope bring forth but a languid and scanty harvest. My earliest idol was ambition; but then came others, love and knowledge, and afterwards the desire to bless. That desire you may term ambition; but we will suppose them separate passions; for by the latter I would signify the thirst for glory, either in evil or in good; and the former teaches us, though by little and little, to gain its object, no less in secrecy than for applause; and Wisdom, which opens to us a world, vast, but hidden from the crowd, establishes also over that world an arbiter of its own, so that its disciples grow proud, and communing with their own hearts, care for no louder judgment than the still voice within. It is thus that indifference, not to the welfare, but to the report, of others grows over us; and often, while we are the most ardent in their cause, we are the least anxious for their esteem."

"And yet," said Lord Ulswater, "I have thought the passion for esteem is the best guarantee for deserving it."

"Nor without justice—other passions may supply its place, and produce the same effects; but the love of true glory is the most legitimate agent of extensive good, and you do right to worship and enshrine it. For me it is dead: it survived—ay, the truth shall out!—poverty, want, disappointment, baffled aspirations—all, all, but the deadness, the lethargy of regret: when no one was left upon this altered earth to animate its efforts, to smile upon its success, then the last spark quivered and died;—and—and

—but forgive me—on this subject I am not often wont to wander. I would say that ambition is for me no more—not so are its effects; but the hope of serving that race whom I have loved as brothers, but who have never known me—who, by the exterior" (and here something bitter mingled with his voice), "pass sentence upon the heart—in whose eyes I am only the cold, the wayward, the haughty, the morose—the hope of serving them is to me, now, a far stronger passion than ambition was heretofore; and, whatever for that end the love of fame would have dictated, the love of mankind will teach me still more ardently to perform."

They were now upon the bridge. Pausing, they leant over, and looked along the scene before them. Dark and hushed, the river flowed sullenly on, save where the reflected stars made a tremulous and broken beam on the black surface of the water, or the lights of the vast City which lay in shadow on its banks, scattered, at capricious intervals, a pale but unpiercing wanness, rather than lustre, along the tide; or, save where the stillness as occasionally broken by the faint oar of the boatman, or the call of his rude voice, mellowed almost into music by distance and the element.

But behind them as they leant, the feet of passengers, on the great thoroughfare, passed not oft—but quick; and that sound, the commonest of earth's, made rarer and rarer by the advancing night, contrasted, rather than destroyed, the quiet of the heaven, and the solemnity of the silent stars.

"It is an old, but a just, comparison," said Mordaunt's companion, "which has likened life to a river such as we now survey, gliding alternately in light or in darkness, in sunshine or in storm, to that great ocean in which all waters meet."

"If," said Algernon, with his usual thoughtful and pensive smile, "we may be allowed to vary that simile, I would, separating the universal and eternal course of Des-

tiny from the fleeting generations of human life, compare the river before us to *that* course, and not *it*, but the city scattered on its banks, to the varieties and mutability of life. There (in the latter) crowded together in the great chaos of social union, we herd in the night of ages, flinging the little lustre of our dim lights over the sullen tide which rolls beside us—seeing the tremulous ray glitter on the surface, only to show us how profound is the gloom which it cannot break, and the depths which it is too faint to pierce. There Crime stalks, and Woe hushes her moan, and Poverty couches, and Wealth riots—and Death, in all and each, is at his silent work. But the stream of Fate, unconscious of our changes and decay, glides on to its engulfing bourne; and, while it mirrors the faintest smile or the lightest frown of heaven, beholds, without a change upon its surface, the generations of earth perish, and be renewed, along its banks!"

There was a pause; and by an involuntary and natural impulse, they turned from the waves beneath, to the heaven, which, in its breathing contrast, spread all eloquently, yet hushed, above. They looked upon the living and intense stars, and felt palpably at their hearts that spell—wild, but mute—which nothing on or of earth can inspire; that pining of the imprisoned soul, that longing after the immortality on high, which is perhaps no imaginary type of the immortality ourselves are heirs to.

"It is on such nights as these," said Mordaunt, who first broke the silence, but with a low and soft voice, "that we are tempted to believe that in Plato's divine fancy there is as divine a truth—that 'our souls are *indeed* of the same essence as the stars,' and that the mysterious yearning, the impatient wish which swells and soars within us to mingle with their glory, is but the instinctive and natural longing to re-unite the divided *portion* of an immortal spirit, stored in these cells of clay, with the original lustre of the heavenly and burning *whole!*"

"And *hence* then," said his companion, pursuing the

idea, "might we also believe in that wondrous and wild influence which the stars have been fabled to exercise over our fate; hence might we shape a visionary clue to their imagined power over our birth, our destinies, and our death."

"Perhaps," rejoined Mordaunt, and Lord Ulswater has since said that his countenance as he spoke, wore an awful and strange aspect, which lived long and long afterwards in the memory of his companion, "perhaps they *are* tokens and signs between the soul and the things of Heaven which do not wholly shame the doctrine of *him*[1] from whose bright wells Plato drew (while he coloured with his own gorgeous errors) the waters of his sublime lore." As Mordaunt thus spoke, his voice changed: he paused abruptly, and, pointing to a distant quarter of the heavens, said,

"Look yonder; do you see, in the far horizon, one large and solitary star, that, at this very moment, seems to wax pale and paler, as my hand points to it?"

"I see it—it shrinks and soars, while we gaze into the farther depths of heaven, as if it were seeking to rise to some higher orbit."

"And do you see," rejoined Mordaunt, "yon fleecy, but dusky cloud, which sweeps slowly along the sky towards it? What shape does that cloud wear to your eyes?"

"It seems to me," answered Lord Ulswater, "to assume the exact semblance of a funeral procession—the human shape appears to me as distinctly moulded in the thin vapours as in ourselves; nor would it perhaps ask too great indulgence from our fancy, to image amongst the darker forms in the centre of the cloud one bearing the very appearance *of a bier*—the plume, and the caparison, and the steeds, and the mourners! Still, as I look, the likeness seems to me to increase!"

"Strange," said Mordaunt, musingly, "how strange is this thing which we call the mind! Strange that the dreams and superstitions of childhood should cling to it

[1] Socrates, who taught the belief in omens.

with so inseparable and fond a strength! I remember, years since, that I was affected even as I am now, to a degree which wiser men might shrink to confess, upon gazing on a cloud exactly similar to that which at this instant we behold. But see—that cloud has passed over the star; and now, as it rolls away, look, the star itself has vanished into the heavens."

"But I fear," answered Lord Ulswater, with a slight smile, "that we can deduce no omen either from the cloud or the star: would, indeed, that Nature *were* more visibly knit with our individual existence! Would that in the heavens there *were* a book, and in the waves a voice, and on the earth a token of the mysteries and enigmas of our fate!"

"And yet," said Mordaunt, slowly, as his mind gradually rose from its dreamlike oppression to its wonted and healthful tone, "yet in truth, we want neither sign nor omen from other worlds to teach us all that it is the end of existence to fulfil in this; and that seems to me a far less exalted wisdom which enables us to solve the *riddles*, than that which elevates us above the *chances*, of the future."

"But *can* we be placed above those chances—can we become independent of that fate to which the ancients taught that even their deities were submitted?"

"Let us not so wrong the ancients," answered Mordaunt; "their poets taught it, not their philosophers. Would not virtue be a dream, a mockery indeed, if it were, like the herb of the field, a thing of blight and change, of withering and renewal, a minion of the sunbeam and the cloud? Shall calamity deject it? Shall prosperity pollute? *then* let it not be the object of our aspiration, but the byword of our contempt. No: let us rather believe with the great of old, that when it is based on wisdom, it is throned above change and chance! throned above the things of a petty and sordid world! throned above the Olympus of the heathen! throned above the Stars which fade, and the

Moon which waneth in her course! Shall *we* believe less of the divinity of Virtue than an Athenian Sage? Shall *we*, to whose eyes have been revealed without a cloud, the blaze and the glory of Heaven, make Virtue a slave to those chains of earth which the Pagan subjected to her feet? But if by *her* we can trample on the ills of life, are we not, a hundredfold more, by her, the vanquishers of death? All creation lies before us; shall we cling to a grain of dust? All immortality is our heritage: shall we gasp and sicken for a moment's breath? What if we perish within an hour?—what if already the black cloud lowers over us—what if from our hopes and projects, and the fresh woven ties which we have knit around our life, we are abruptly torn, shall we be the creatures or the conquerors of fate? Shall we be the exiled from a home, or the escaped from a dungeon? Are we not as birds which look into the Great Air only through a barred cage? Shall we shrink and mourn when the cage is shattered, and all space spreads around us our element and our empire? No; it was not for this that, in an elder day, Virtue and Valour received but a common name! The soul, into which *that* Sprit has breathed its glory, is not only above Fate—it profits by her assaults! Attempt to weaken it, and you nerve it with a new strength—to wound it, and you render it more invulnerable—to destroy it, and you make it immortal! This, indeed, is the Sovereign whose realm every calamity increases—the Hero whose triumph every invasion augments—standing on the last sands of life, and encircled by the advancing waters of Darkness and Eternity, it becomes in its expiring effort *doubly* the Victor and the King!"

Impressed by the fervour of his companion, with a sympathy almost approaching to awe, Lord Ulswater pressed Mordaunt's hand, but offered no reply; and both, excited by the high theme of their conversation, and the thoughts which it produced, moved in silence from their post, and walked slowly homeward.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

Is it possible?
Is't so? I *can* no longer what I *would:*
No longer draw back at my liking! I
Must do the deed because I thought of it.

* * * *

What is thy enterprise—thy aim, thy object?
Hast honestly confessed it to thyself?

* * * *

O bloody, frightful deed!

* * * *

Was that my purpose when we parted?
O God of Justice!—COLERIDGE'S *Wallenstein.*

WE need scarcely say that one of the persons overheard by Mr. Brown was Wolfe, and the peculiar tone of oratorical exaggeration, characteristic of the man, has already informed the reader with which of the two he is identified.

On the evening after the conversation—the evening fixed for the desperate design on which he had set the last hazard of his life—the republican, parting from the companions with whom he had passed the day, returned home to compose the fever of his excited thoughts, and have a brief hour of solitary meditation, previous to the committal of that act which he knew must be his immediate passport to the gaol and the gibbet. On entering his squalid and miserable home, the woman of the house, a blear-eyed and filthy hag, who was holding to her withered breast an infant, which, even in sucking the stream that nourished its tainted existence, betrayed upon its haggard countenance the polluted nature of the mother's milk, from which it drew at once the support of life and the seeds of death—this woman, meeting him in the narrow passage, arrested his steps, to acquaint him that a gentleman had that day called upon him and left a letter in his room, with strict charge of care and speed in its delivery. The visitor had

not, however communicated his name, though the curiosity excited by his mien and dress had prompted the crone particularly to demand it.

Little affected by this incident which to the hostess seemed no unimportant event, Wolfe pushed the woman aside, with an impatient gesture, and, scarcely conscious of the abuse which followed this motion, hastened up the sordid stairs to his apartment. He sate himself down upon the foot of his bed, and, covering his face with his hands, surrendered his mind to the tide of contending emotions which rushed upon it.

What was he about to commit? Murder!—murder in its coldest and most premeditated guise! "No!" cried he aloud, starting from the bed, and dashing his clenched hand violently against his brow—"no—no—no! it is not murder, it is justice! Did not they, the hirelings of Oppression, ride over their crushed and shrieking countrymen, with drawn blades and murderous hands? Was I not among them at the hour? Did I not with these eyes see the sword uplifted, and the smiter strike? Were not my ears filled with the groans of their victims and the savage yells of the trampling dastards?—yells which rung in triumph over women and babes and weaponless men! And shall there be no vengeance? Yes, it shall fall, not upon the tools, but the master—not upon the slaves, but the despot. "Yet," said he, suddenly pausing, as his voice sank into a whisper, "assassination!—in another hour, perhaps—a deed irrevocable—a seal set upon two souls—the victim's and the judge's! Fetters and the felon's cord before me!—the shouting mob—the stigma!—no, no, it will *not* be the stigma: the gratitude, rather, of future times, when motives will be appreciated and party hushed! Have I not wrestled with wrong from my birth?—have I not rejected all offers from the men of an impious power?—have I made a moment's truce with the poor man's foe?—have I not thrice purchased free principles with an imprisoned frame—have I not bartered my substance, and my hopes, and

the pleasures of this world for my unmoving, unswerving faith in the Great Cause—am I not about to crown all by one blow—one lightning blow, destroying at once my self and a criminal too mighty for the law?—and shall not history do justice to this devotedness—this absence from all self, hereafter—and admire, even if it condemn?"

Buoying himself with these reflections, and exciting the jaded current of his designs once more into an unnatural impetus, the unhappy man ceased and paced with rapid steps the narrow limits of his chamber; his eye fell upon something bright, which glittered amidst the darkening shadows of the evening. At that sight his heart stood still for a moment; it was the weapon of intended death: he took it up, and as he surveyed the shining barrel, and felt the lock, a more settled sternness gathered at once over his fierce features and stubborn heart. The pistol had been bought and prepared for the purpose with the utmost nicety, not only for use but show; nor is it unfrequent to find in such instances of premeditated ferocity in design, a fearful kind of coxcombry lavished upon the means.

Striking a light, Wolfe reseated himself deliberately, and began, with the utmost care, to load the pistol; that scene would not have been an unworthy sketch for those painters who possess the power of giving to the low a force almost approaching to grandeur, and of augmenting the terrible by a mixture of the ludicrous. The sordid chamber, the damp walls, the high window, in which a handful of discoloured paper supplied the absence of many a pane; the single table of rough oak, the rush-bottomed and broken chair, the hearth unconscious of a fire, over which a mean bust of Milton held its tutelary sway—while the dull rushlight streamed dimly upon the swarthy and strong countenance of Wolfe, intent upon his work—a countenance in which the deliberate calmness that had succeeded the late struggle of feeling had in it a mingled power of energy and haggardness of languor—the one of the desperate design, the other of the exhausted body; while in the knit brow,

and the iron lines, and even in the settled ferocity of expression, there was yet something above the stamp of the vulgar ruffian—something eloquent of the motive no less than the deed, and significant of that not ignoble perversity of mind which diminished the guilt, yet increased the dreadness of the meditated crime, by mocking it with the name of virtue.

As he had finished his task, and, hiding the pistol on his person, waited for the hour in which his accomplice was to summon him to the fatal deed, he perceived, close by him on the table the letter which the woman had spoken of, and which, till then, he had, in the excitement of his mind, utterly forgotten. He opened it mechanically—an inclosure fell to the ground. He picked it up—it was a banknote of considerable amount. The lines in the letter were few, anonymous, and written in a hand evidently disguised. They were calculated peculiarly to touch the republican, and reconcile him to the gift. In them the writer professed to be actuated by no other feeling than admiration for the unbending integrity which had characterised Wolfe's life, and the desire that sincerity in any principles, however they might differ from his own, should not be rewarded only with indigence and ruin.

It is impossible to tell how far, in Wolfe's mind, his own desperate fortunes might, insensibly, have mingled with the motives which led him to his present design: certain it is that wherever the future is hopeless the mind is easily converted from the rugged to the criminal; and equally certain it is that we are apt to justify to ourselves many offences in a cause where we have made great sacrifices: and, perhaps, if this unexpected assistance had come to Wolfe a short time before, it might, by softening his heart, and reconciling him in some measure to fortune, have rendered him less susceptible to the fierce voice of political hatred and the instigation of his associates. Nor can we, who are removed from the temptations of the poor—temptations to which

ours are as breezes which woo, to storms which "tumble towers"—nor can we tell how far the acerbity of want, and the absence of wholesome sleep, and the contempt of the rich, and the rankling memory of better fortunes, or even the mere fierceness which absolute hunger produces in the humours and veins of all that hold nature's life—nor can we tell how far these madden the temper, which is but a minion of the body, and plead in irresistible excuse for the crimes which our wondering virtue —haughty because unsolicited—stamps with its loftiest reprobation!

The cloud fell from Wolfe's brow, and his eye gazed, musingly and rapt, upon vacancy. Steps were heard ascending—the voice of a distant clock tolled with a distinctness which seemed like strokes palpable as well as audible to the senses; and as the door opened, and his accomplice entered, Wolfe muttered—"Too late—too late!"—and first crushing the note in his hands, then tore it into atoms, with a vehemence which astonished his companion, who, however, knew not its value.

"Come," said he stamping his foot violently upon the floor, as if to conquer by passion all internal relenting—"come, my friend, not another moment is to be lost; let us hasten to our holy deed!"

"I trust," said Wolfe's companion, when they were in the open street, "that we shall not have our trouble in vain; it is a brave night for it! Davidson wanted us to throw grenades into the ministers' carriages, as the best plan; and faith, we can try that if all else fails!"

Wolfe remained silent—indeed he scarcely heard his companion; for a sullen indifference to all things around him had wrapt his spirit—that singular feeling, or rather absence from feeling, common to all men, when bound on some exciting action, upon which their minds are already and wholly bent;—which renders them utterly without thought, when the superficial would imagine they were the most full of it, and leads them to the threshold of that event

which had before engrossed all their most waking and fervid contemplation with a blind and mechanical unconsciousness, resembling the influence of a dream.

They arrived at the place they had selected for their station—sometimes walking to and fro, in order to escape observation, sometimes hiding behind the pillars of a neighbouring house, they awaited the coming of their victims. The time passed on—the streets grew more and more empty; and, at last, only the visitation of the watchman, or the occasional steps of some homeward wanderer, disturbed the solitude of their station.

At last, just after midnight, two men were seen approaching towards them, linked arm in arm, and walking very slowly.

"Hist—hist," whispered Wolfe's comrade—"there they are at last—is your pistol cocked?"

"Ay," answered Wolfe, "and yours: man—collect yourself—your hand shakes."

"It is with the cold then," said the ruffian, using, unconsciously, a celebrated reply—"let us withdraw behind the pillar."

They did so—the figures approached them; the night, though star-lit, was not sufficiently clear to give the assassins more than the outline of their shapes and the characters of their height and air.

"Which," said Wolfe, in a whisper—for, as he had said, he had never seen either of his intended victims—"which is *my* prey?"

"Oh, the nearest to you," said the other, with trembling accents; "you know his d—d proud walk, and erect head—that is the way he answers the people's petitions, I'll be sworn. The taller and farther one, who stoops more in his gait, is mine."

The strangers were now at hand.

"You know you are to fire first, Wolfe," whispered the nearer ruffian, whose heart had long failed him, and who was already meditating escape.

"But are you sure—quite sure, of the identity of our prey?" said Wolfe, grasping his pistol.

"Yes, yes," said the other: and, indeed, the air of the nearest person approaching them bore, in the distance, a strong resemblance to that of the minister it was supposed to designate. His companion, who appeared much younger, and of a mien equally patrician, but far less proud, seemed listening to the supposed minister with the most earnest attention. Apparently occupied with their conversation, when about twenty yards from the assassins they stood still for a few moments.

"Stop, Wolfe, stop," said the republican's accomplice, whose Indian complexion, by fear, and the wan light of the lamps and skies, faded into a jaundiced and yellow hue, while the bony whiteness of his teeth made a grim contrast with the glare of his small, black, sparkling eyes. "Stop, Wolfe—hold your hand. I see, now, that I was mistaken; the farther one is a stranger to me, and the nearer one is much thinner than the minister: pocket your pistol—quick—quick—and let us withdraw."

Wolfe dropped his hand, as if dissuaded from his design; but, as he looked upon the trembling frame and chattering teeth of his terrified accomplice, a sudden, and not unnatural, idea darted across his mind that he was wilfully deceived by the fears of his companion; and that the strangers, who had now resumed their way, were indeed what his accomplice had first reported them to be. Filled with this impression, and acting upon the momentary spur which it gave, the infatuated and fated man pushed aside his comrade, with a muttered oath at his cowardice and treachery, and taking a sure and steady, though quick, aim at the person, who was now just within the certain destruction of his hand, he fired the pistol. The stranger reeled and fell into the arms of his companion.

"Hurra!" cried the murderer, leaping from his hiding-place, and walking with rapid strides towards his victim—"hurra! for liberty and England!"

Scarce had he uttered those prostituted names, before the triumph of misguided zeal faded suddenly and for ever from his brow and soul.

The wounded man leaned back in the supporting arms of his chilled and horror-stricken friend; who, kneeling on one knee to support him, fixed his eager eyes upon the pale and changing countenance of his burthen, unconscious of the presence of the assassin.

"Speak, Mordaunt, speak! how is it with you?" he said.

Recalled from his torpor by the voice, Mordaunt opened his eyes, and muttering, "My child, my child," sank back again; and Lord Ulswater (for it was he) felt, by his increased weight, that death was hastening rapidly on its victim.

"Oh!" said he, bitterly, and recalling their last conversation—"oh! where—where—when this man—the wise, the kind, the innocent, almost the perfect, falls thus in the very prime of existence, by a sudden blow from an obscure hand—unblest in life, inglorious in death—oh! where—where is this boasted triumph of Virtue, or where is its reward?"

True to his idol at the last, as these words fell upon his dizzy and receding senses, Mordaunt raised himself by a sudden, though momentary, exertion; and fixing his eyes full upon Lord Ulswater, his moving lips (for his voice was already gone) seemed to shape out the answer, "*It is here!*"

With this last effort, and with an expression upon his aspect, which seemed at once to soften and to hallow the haughty and calm character which in life it was wont to bear, Algernon Mordaunt fell once more back into the arms of his companion and immediately expired.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

Come, Death, these are thy victims, and the axe
Waits those who claimed the chariot.—Thus we count
Our treasures in the dark, and when the light
Breaks on the cheated eye, we find the coin
Was skulls—

* * * * *

Yet the while
Fate links strange contrasts, and the scaffold's gloom
Is neighboured by the altar.—ANON.

WHEN Crauford's guilt and imprisonment became known; when inquiry developed, day after day, some new maze in the mighty and intricate machinery of his sublime dishonesty; when houses of the most reputed wealth and profuse splendour, whose affairs Crauford had transacted, were discovered to have been for years utterly undermined and beggared, and only supported by the extraordinary genius of the individual by whose extraordinary guilt, now no longer concealed, they were suddenly and irretrievably destroyed; when it was ascertained that, for nearly the fifth part of a century, a system of villainy had been carried on throughout Europe, in a thousand different relations, without a single breath of suspicion, and yet which a single breath of suspicion could at once have arrested and exposed; when it was proved that a man whose luxury had exceeded the pomp of princes, and whose wealth was supposed more inexhaustible than the enchanted purse of Fortunatus, had for eighteen years been a penniless pensioner upon the prosperity of others; when the long scroll of this almost incredible fraud was slowly, piece by piece, unrolled before the terrified curiosity of the public, an invading army at the Temple gates could scarcely have excited such universal consternation and dismay.

The mob, always the first to execute justice, in their own inimitable way took vengeance upon Crauford by burning

the house no longer his, and the houses of the partners, who were the worst and most innocent sufferers for his crime. No epithet of horror and hatred was too severe for the offender; and serious apprehension for the safety of Newgate, his present habitation, was generally expressed. The more saintly members of that sect to which the hypocrite had ostensibly belonged, held up their hands, and declared that the fall of the Pharisee was a judgment of Providence. Nor did they think it worth while to make, for a moment, the trifling inquiry, how far the judgment of Providence was also implicated in the destruction of the numerous and innocent families he had ruined!

But, whether from that admiration for genius, common to the vulgar, which forgets all crime in the cleverness of committing it, or from that sagacious disposition peculiar to the English, which makes a hero of any person eminently wicked, no sooner did Crauford's trial come on than the tide of popular feeling experienced a sudden revulsion. It became, in an instant, the fashion to admire and to pity a gentleman so *talented* and so *unfortunate*. Likenesses of Mr. Crauford appeared in ever print-shop in town—the papers discovered that he was the very facsimile of the great King of Prussia. The laureate made an ode upon him, which was set to music; and the public learnt, with tears of compassionate regret at so romantic a circumstance, that pigeon-pies were sent daily to his prison, made by the delicate hands of one of his former mistresses. Some sensation, also, was excited by the circumstance of his poor wife (who soon afterwards died of a broken heart) coming to him in prison, and being with difficulty torn away; but then, conjugal affection is so very commonplace, and—there was something so engrossingly pathetic in the anecdote of the pigeon-pies!

It must be confessed that Crauford displayed singular address and ability upon his trial; and fighting every inch of ground, even to the last, when so strong a phalanx of circumstances appeared against him, that no hope of a

favourable verdict could for a moment have supported him —he concluded the trial with a speech delivered by himself —so impressive, so powerful, so dignified, yet so impassioned, that the whole audience, hot as they were, dissolved into tears.

Sentence was passed—Death! But such was the infatuation of the people, that every one expected that a pardon, for crime more complicated and extensive than half the *Newgate Calendar* could equal, would of course be obtained. Persons of the highest rank interested themselves in his behalf: and up to the night before his execution, expectations, almost amounting to certainty, were entertained by the criminal, his friends, and the public. On that night was conveyed to Crauford the positive and peremptory assurance that there was no hope. Let us now enter his cell, and be the sole witnesses of his solitude.

Crauford was, as we have seen, a man in some respects of great *moral* courage, of extraordinary daring in the formation of schemes, of unwavering resolution in supporting them, and of a temper which rather rejoiced in, than shunned, the braving of a distant danger for the sake of an adequate reward. But this courage was supported and fed solely by the self-persuasion of consummate genius, and his profound confidence both in his good fortune, and the inexhaustibility of his resources. *Physically* he was a coward! *immediate* peril to be confronted by the *person*, not the *mind*, had ever appalled him like a child. He had never dared to back a spirited horse. He had been known to remain for days in an obscure ale-house in the country, to which a shower had accidentally driven him, because it had been idly reported that a wild beast had escaped from a caravan, and been seen in the vicinity of the inn. No dog had ever been allowed in his household lest it *might* go mad. In a word, Crauford was one to whom life and sensual enjoyments were everything—the supreme blessings—the only blessings.

As long as he had the hope, and it was a sanguine hope,

of *saving* life, nothing had disturbed his mind from its serenity. His gaiety had never forsaken him; and his cheerfulness and fortitude had been the theme of every one admitted to his presence. But when this hope was abruptly and finally closed—when Death, immediate and unavoidable—Death—the extinction of existence—the *cessation of sense*, stood bare and hideous before him, his genius seemed at once to abandon him to his fate, and the inherent weakness of his nature to gush over every prop and barrier of his art.

"No hope!" muttered he, in a voice of the keenest anguish—"no hope—merciful God! none—none! What, I—*I*—who have shamed kings in luxury—I to die on the gibbet, among the reeking, gaping, swinish crowd with whom— O God, that I were one of *them* even! that I were the most loathsome beggar that ever crept forth to taint the air with sores!—that I were a toad immured in a stone, sweltering in the atmosphere of its own venom!—a snail crawling on these very walls, and tracking his painful path in slime!—anything—anything, but death! And *such* death! The gallows—the scaffold—the halter—the fingers of the hangman paddling round the neck where the softest caresses have clung *and sated*. To die—die—die! What, *I* whose pulse now beats so strongly—whose blood keeps so warm and vigorous a motion!—in the very prime of enjoyment and manhood—all life's million paths of pleasure before me—to die—to swing to the winds—to hang—ay—ay—to hang!—to be cut down, distorted and hideous—to be thrust into the earth with worms—to rot—, or—or—or hell! is there a hell?—*better that even, than annihilation!*

"Fool—fool!—damnable fool that I was" (and in his sudden rage he clenched his own flesh till the nails met in it); "had I but got to France one day sooner! Why don't you save me—save me—you whom I have banqueted and feasted, and lent money to!—one word from you might have saved me—I will not die! I don't deserve it!—I am innocent!—I tell you, Not guilty, my lord—not guilty! Have you no heart, no consciences?—murder—murder—murder!"

and the wretched man sank upon the ground, and tried with his hands to grasp the stone floor, as if to cling to it from some imaginary violence.

Turn we from him to the cell in which another criminal awaits also the awful coming of his latest morrow.

Pale, motionless, silent—with his face bending over his bosom, and hands clasped tightly upon his knees, Wolfe sat in his dungeon, and collected his spirit against the approaching consummation of his turbulent and stormy fate. His bitterest punishment had been already past; mysterious Chance, or rather the Power above chance, had denied to him the haughty triumph of self-applause. No sophistry, now, could compare his doom to that of Sidney, or his deed to the act of the avenging Brutus.

Murder—causeless—objectless—universally execrated—rested, and would rest (till oblivion wrapt it) upon his name. It had appeared, too, upon his trial, that he had, in the information he had received, been the mere tool of a spy in the ministers' pay; and that, four weeks before his intended deed, his design had been known, and his conspiracy only not bared to the public eye, because political craft awaited a riper opportunity for the disclosure. He had not then merely been the blind dupe of his own passions, but, more humbling still, an instrument in the hands of the very men whom his hatred was sworn to destroy. No a wreck—not a straw, of the vain glory, for which he had forfeited life, and risked his soul, could he hug to a sinking heart, and say—"This is my support."

The remorse of gratitude embittered his cup still farther. On Mordaunt's person had been discovered a memorandum of the money anonymously inclosed to Wolfe on the day of the murder; and it was couched in words of esteem which melted the fierce heart of the republican into the only tears he had shed since childhood. From that time, a sullen, silent spirit fell upon him. He spoke to none—heeded none: he made no defence on trial—no complaint of severity—no appeal from judgment. The iron had entered into

his soul—but it supported, while it tortured. Even now as we gaze upon his inflexible and dark countenance, no transitory emotion—no natural spasm of sudden fear for the catastrophe of the morrow—no intense and working passions, struggling into calm—no sign of internal hurricanes, rising, as it were, from the hidden depths, agitate the surface, or betray the secrets of the unfathomable world within. The mute lip—the rigid brow—the downcast eye—a heavy and dread stillness, brooding over every feature—these are all we behold.

Is it that thought sleeps, locked in the torpor of a senseless and rayless dream; or that an evil incubus weighs upon it, crushing its risings, but deadening not its pangs? Does Memory fly to the green fields and happy home of his childhood, or the lonely studies of his daring and restless youth, or his earliest homage to that Spirit of Freedom which shone bright, and still, and pure upon the solitary chamber of him who sang of heaven;[1] or (dwelling on its last and most fearful object) rolls it only through one tumultuous and convulsive channel—Despair? Whatever be within the silent and deep heart—pride, or courage, or callousness, or that stubborn firmness, which, once principle, has grown habit, cover all as with a pall; and the strung nerve and the hard endurance of the human flesh, sustain what the immortal mind perhaps quails beneath, in its dark retreat, but once dreamt that it would exult to bear.

The fatal hour had come! and, through the long dim passages of the prison, four criminals were led forth to execution. The first was Crauford's associate, Bradley. This man prayed fervently; and, though he was trembling and pale, his mien and aspect bore something of the calmness of resignation.

It has been said there is no friendship among the wicked. I have examined this maxim closely, and believe it, like most popular proverbs,—false. In wickedness there is peril—and mutual terror is the strongest of ties. At all

[1] Milton.

events, the wicked can, not unoften, excite an attachment in their followers denied to virtue. Habitually courteous, caressing, and familiar, Crauford had, despite his own suspicions of Bradley, really touched the heart of one, whom weakness and want, not nature, had gained to vice; and it was not till Crauford's guilt was by other witnesses undeniably proved that Bradley could be tempted to make any confession tending to implicate him.

He now crept close to his former partner, and frequently clasped his hand, and besought him to take courage, and to pray. But Crauford's eye was glassy and dim, and his veins seemed filled with water—so numbed and cold, and white was his cheek. Fear, in him, had passed its paroxysms, and was now insensibility; it was only when they urged him to pray that a sort of benighted consciousness strayed over his countenance and his ashen lips muttered something which none heard.

After him came the Creole, who had been Wolfe's accomplice. On the night of the murder, he had taken advantage of the general loneliness, and the confusion of the few present, and fled. He was found, however, fast asleep, in a garret, before morning, by the officers of justice; and, on trial, he had confessed all. This man was in a rapid consumption. The delay of another week would have given to nature the termination of his life. He, like Bradley, seemed earnest and absorbed in prayer.

Last came Wolfe, his tall, gaunt frame worn, by confinement and internal conflict, into a gigantic skeleton; his countenance, too, had undergone a withering change: his grizzled hair seemed now to have acquired only the one hoary hue of age; and, though you might trace in his air and eye the sternness, you could no longer detect the fire, of former days. Calm, as on the preceding night, no emotion broke over his dark, but not defying features. He rejected, though not irreverently, all aid from the benevolent priest, and seemed to seek, in the pride of his own heart, a substitute for the resignation of Religion.

"Miserable man!" at last said the good clergyman, in whom zeal overcame kindness, "have you at this awful hour no prayer upon your lips?"

A living light shot then for a moment over Wolfe's eye and brow. "I have!" said he; and raising his clasped hands to Heaven, he continued in the memorable words of Sidney—"Lord, defend Thy own cause, and defend those who defend it! Stir up such as are faint; direct those that are willing; confirm those that waver; give wisdom and integrity to all: order all things so as may most redound to Thine own glory!"

"I had once hoped," added Wolfe, sinking in his tone—"I had once hoped that I might with justice have continued that holy prayer;[1] but—" he ceased abruptly; the glow passed from his countenance, his lip quivered, and the tears stood in his eyes; and that was the only weakness he betrayed, and those were his last words.

Crauford continued, even while the rope was put round him, mute and unconscious of everything. It was said that his pulse (that of an uncommonly strong and healthy man on the previous day) had become so low and faint that, an hour before his execution, it could not be felt. He and the Creole were the only ones who struggled; Wolfe died, seemingly, without a pang.

From these feverish and fearful scenes, the mind turns, with a feeling of grateful relief, to contemplate the happiness of one whose candid and high nature, and warm affections, Fortune, long befriending, had at length blest.

It was on an evening in the earliest flush of returning spring, that Lord Ulswater, with his beautiful bride, entered his magnificent domains. It had been his wish and order, in consequence of his brother's untimely death, that

[1] "Grant that I may die glorifying Thee for all Thy mercies, and that at the last Thou hast permitted me to be singled out as a witness of Thy truth, and even by the confession of my opposers for that OLD CAUSE in which I was from my youth engaged, and for which Thou hast often and wonderfully declared Thyself."—ALGERNON SIDNEY.

no public rejoicings should be made on his marriage; but the good old steward could not persuade himself entirely to enforce obedience to the first order of his new master; and as the carriage drove into the park gates, crowds on crowds were assembled, to welcome and to gaze.

No sooner had they caught a glimpse of their young lord, whose affability and handsome person had endeared him to all who remembered his early days, and of the half blushing, half smiling, countenance beside him, than their enthusiasm could be no longer restrained. The whole scene rang with shouts of joy—and through an air filled with blessings, and amidst an avenue of happy faces, the bridal pair arrived at their home.

"Ah! Clarence (for so I *must* still call you)," said Flora, her beautiful eyes streaming with delicious tears, "let us never leave these kind hearts; let us live amongst them, and strive to repay and deserve the blessings which they shower upon us! Is not Benevolence, dearest, better than Ambition?"

"Can it not rather, my own Flora, be Ambition itself?"

CONCLUSION.

So rest you, merry gentlemen.—*Monsieur Thomas.*

The Author has now only to take his leave of the less important characters whom he has assembled together; and then, all due courtesy to his numerous guests being performed, to retire himself to repose.

First, then, for Mr. Morris Brown:—In the second year of Lord Ulswater's marriage, the worthy broker paid Mrs. Minden's nephew a visit, in which he persuaded that gentleman to accept "as presents," two admirable firescreens, the property of the late Lady Waddilove: the same may be now seen in the housekeeper's room, at Borodaile Park,

by any person willing to satisfy his curiosity and—the housekeeper. Of all farther particulars respecting Mr. Morris Brown, history is silent.

In the obituary for 1792, we find the following paragraph:—"Died at his house in Putney, aged seventy-three, Sir Nicholas Copperas, Knt., a gentleman well known on the Exchange for his facetious humour. Several of his *bons-mots* are still recorded in the Common Council. When residing many years ago, in the suburbs of London, this worthy gentleman was accustomed to go from his own house to the Exchange in a coach called 'the Swallow,' that passed his door just at breakfast-time; upon which occasion he was wont wittily to observe to his accomplished spouse—'And now, Mrs. Copperas, having swallowed in the roll, I will e'en roll in the Swallow!' His whole property is left to Adolphus Copperas, Esq., banker."

And in the next year we discover—

"Died, on Wednesday last, at her jointure house, Putney, in her sixty-eighth year, the amiable and elegant Lady Copperas, relict of the late Sir Nicholas, Knt."

Mr. Trollolop, having exhausted the whole world of metaphysics, died like Descartes, "in believing he had left nothing unexplained."

Mr. Callythorpe entered the House of Commons at the time of the French Revolution. He distinguished himself by many votes in favour of Mr. Pitt, and one speech which ran thus: "Sir, I believe my right honourable friend who spoke last (Mr. Pitt) designs to ruin the country; but I will support him through all; Honourable Gentlemen may laugh—but I'm a true Briton, and will not serve my friend the less because I scorn to flatter him."

Sir Christopher Findlater lost his life by an accident arising from the upsetting of his carriage; his good heart not having suffered him to part with a drunken coachman.

Mr. Glumford turned miser in his old age; and died of want, and an extravagant son.

Our honest Cole and his wife were always among the

most welcome visitors at Lord Ulswater's. In his extreme old age, the ex-king took a journey to Scotland, to see the Author of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.* Nor should we do justice to the chief's critical discernment if we neglected to record that, from the earliest dawn of that great luminary of our age, he predicted its meridian splendour. The eldest son of the gipsy-monarch inherited his father's spirit, and is yet alive, a general and G.C.B.

Mr. Harrison married Miss Elizabeth, and succeeded to the Golden Fleece.

The Duke of Haverfield and Lord Ulswater continued their friendship through life; and the letters of our dear Flora to her correspondent, Eleanor, did not cease even with that critical and perilous period to all maiden correspondents—Marriage. If we may judge from the subsequent letters which we have been permitted to see, Eleanor never repented her brilliant nuptials, nor discovered (as the Duchess of —— once said from experience) "that Dukes are as intolerable for husbands as they are delightful for matches."

And Isabel Mordaunt?—Ah! not in these pages shall *her* history be told even in epitome. Perhaps for some future narrative, her romantic and eventful fate may be reserved. Suffice it for the present, that the childhood of the young heiress passed in the house of Lord Ulswater, whose proudest boast, through a triumphant and prosperous life, was to have been her father's friend; and that as she grew up, she inherited her mother's beauty and gentle heart, and seemed to bear in her deep eyes and melancholy smile some remembrance of the scenes in which her infancy had been passed.

But for Him, the husband and father, whose trials through this wrong world I have portrayed—for him let there be neither murmurs at the blindness of Fate, nor sorrow at the darkness of his doom. Better that the lofty and bright spirit should pass away before the petty business of life had bowed it, or the sordid mists of this low

earth breathed a shadow on its lustre! Who would have asked *that* spirit to have struggled on for years in the intrigues—the hopes—the objects of meaner souls? Who would have desired that the heavenward and impatient heart should have grown inured to the chains and toil of this enslaved state, or hardened into the callousness of age? Nor would we claim the vulgar pittance of compassion for a lot which is exalted *above* regret! Pity is for our weaknesses—to our weaknesses only be it given. It is the aliment of love—it is the wages of ambition—it is the rightful heritage of error! But why should pity be entertained for the soul which never fell?—for the courage which never quailed?—for the majesty never humbled?—for the wisdom which, from the rough things of the common world, raised an empire above earth and destiny?—for the stormy life?—it was a triumph!—for early death?—it was immortality!

I have stood beside Mordaunt's tomb: his will had directed that he should sleep not in the vaults of his haughty line—and his last dwelling is surrounded by a green and pleasant spot. The trees shadow it like a temple; and a silver though fitful brook wails with a constant, yet not ungrateful dirge, at the foot of the hill on which the tomb is placed. I have stood there in those ardent years when our wishes know no boundary, and our ambition no curb; yet, even then, I would have changed my wildest vision of romance for that quiet grave, and the dreams of the distant spirit whose relics reposed beneath it.

THE END.

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